Perspectives

ISSUE 1 | 2020

A MAGAZINE FOR MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF FRATERNITY/SORORITY ADVISORS

AFA Perspectives

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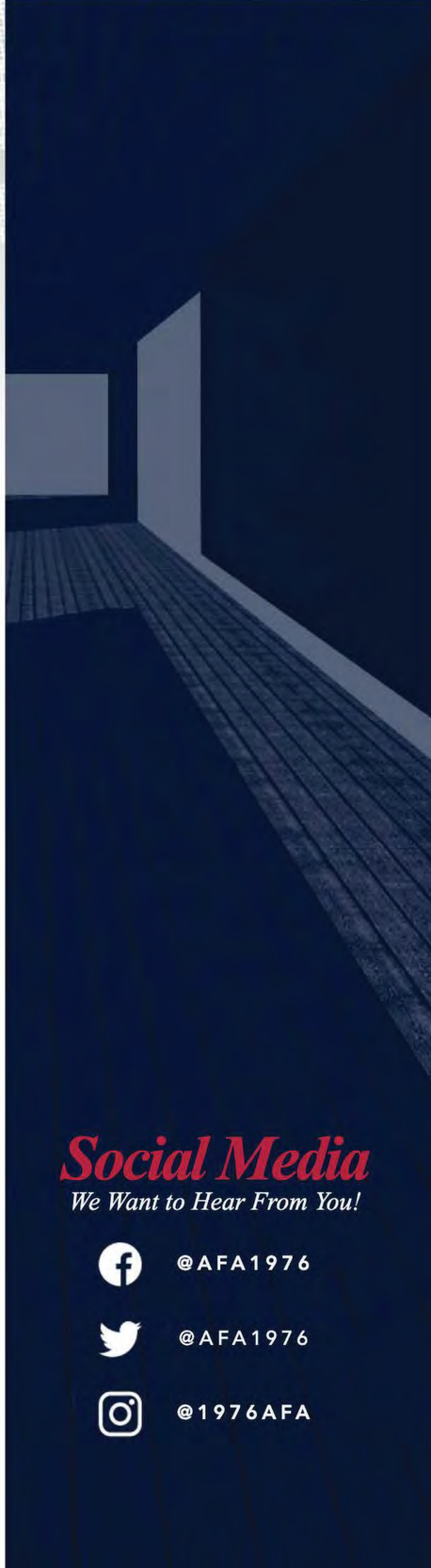

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Perspectives is the official publication of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors, Inc. (AFA). Views expressed are those of the individual authors/contributors/advertisers and are not necessarily those of the Association. AFA encourages the submission of articles, essays, ideas, and advertisements.

Submissions should be directed to the editor, advertising queries to the staff.

Editors:

Noah Borton
Delta Upsilon Fraternity
borton@deltau.org | (317) 875-8900 ext. 206

Brooke Goodman
Delta Phi Epsilon Sorority
brookegoodman01@gmail.com

AFA Staff:

Andrea Starks-Corbin
Director of Marketing & Communications
andrea@afa1976.org

Justin England
Graphic Designer
justin@afa1976.org

2020 Editorial Board:

Brittany Barnes Deeg, RISE Partnerships

Meredith Bielaska, Interfraternal Volunteer

Katherine Carnell, University of Mount Union

Annie Hardie, Sigma Delta Tau

Tyler Havens, Delta Sigma Pi

Andrew Hohn, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

Ashly Horton, The Ohio State University

Heather Kirk, Sigma Phi Epsilon

Kyle Martin, North-American Interfraternity Conference

Kyle Miller, Shippensburg University

Ryan Miller, University of Utah

McKenzie Sauer, University of Iowa

Lindsay Sell, Colorado State University

FROM THE EDITORS

Last year, the Perspectives editorial board submitted a proposal to the AFA board of directors seeking approval for a publication redesign. The reason was multifaceted with a focus on rejuvenating the publication, making structural changes to decrease barriers to writing, increasing the diversity of voices and lived experiences represented, and moving toward a true magazine look and feel. For years, themes drove content. Many of those themes directly and indirectly resulted in entire issues pertaining to matters of concern for historically white fraternities and sororities and white individuals working in a professional capacity. The publication was not serving all of its constituents, nor achieving its full purpose. The proposal was approved and the redesign was announced last November.

This issue is a step toward a publication that does not create barriers to writing and provides an opportunity for more voices to be heard. The design introduces a combination of recurring sections and regular short features to provide space for content unbound by theme, single area of expertise, or specific type of lived experience. Each issue will include content within five sections – Features, Research, Professional Development, Lived Experience and Theory to Practice – and multiple regular short features highlighting the AFA Core Competencies, historical undertones of the fraternity/sorority experience, and more accessible means for sharing and digesting research within the field. We are thankful for the AFA Professional Development and Research committees for partnership on these short features, as well as the AFA board of directors and staff in supporting this redesign.

The cover design for this issue reflects the content included and current state of global, national, and local affairs. As we introduce this new version of Perspectives, the following pages speak to the weight of this time. This weight is experienced differently based on identities, employer, professional or volunteer role, and geographic location, yet finds commonality in the uncertainty that exists and inability to know what is to come. Our hope is the first cover design for this new version of Perspectives conveys that weight.

We also acknowledge barriers to writing can exist despite structural changes. The process of writing can be challenging, especially when writing about one's experiences, identities, work and opinions. To write, there must be a degree of trust – trust in one's knowledge, experience, and abilities to put thoughts into words; trust in editors to amplify your words and care for them as their own; and trust in readers that your words and experiences will be heard and valued. Writing requires courage, intentionality, time, vulnerability, security, and the belief that readers will ensure a safe space for reactions and feedback.

When trust does not exist and one does not believe this publication is a safe space for their words, experiences, identities, work and opinions, barriers emerge. From the first Fraternity Advisors' Newsletter in 1973 to the Perspectives of today, significant work must continue to ensure the level of trust necessary for increasing access and producing a representationally diverse publication in author, voice, knowledge, and thought, exists for members of all identities, professional and/or volunteer backgrounds, and lived experiences. As we introduce this next iteration of Perspectives and strive to evolve in look, content and feel, we will continue to work toward gaining and maintaining that trust.

Noah Borton & Brooke Goodman
Co-editors

Letter from the President

Wendi Kinney

One of the privileges granted to the association president is space in each quarterly publication of Perspectives to address the readership in the "Letter From The President." This space is the president's to use as they see fit. The letter can be a reflection on the topics covered in the publication, highlights of initiatives or the annual meeting, or an opinion on the state of the industry. Or it can be a call to action for the membership.

I am the 40th president of the association. Only two presidents have been individuals of color. White voices have dominated this space for decades. In this issue, this letter serves to amplify the voices of Black members. These incredible people answered my call to share with our members what they want their white and non-Black colleagues to know. I acknowledge the emotional labor these individuals expended in doing so, particularly during yet another period of great fear, anger, sadness, and exhaustion. I am grateful to them for giving of themselves.

Asia Woods
Assistant Director for Fraternity and Sorority Life, UNC Charlotte

This didn't just happen with George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, or Ahmaud Arbery. This didn't just happen in 2016 when Donald Trump was elected. I have family members alive right now that can vividly remember living under Jim Crow; who can remember the term changing from "n***er" to more acceptable slurs like "thug" and "super-predator;" who can remember being harassed by white fraternity members while trying to get the education you told us we needed to have a taste of the so-called "American Dream." What's happening right now is inevitable when a country with a past as dark as ours refuses to acknowledge how it was built. This seed was sowed over 400 years ago when the first slave ship sailed into Jamestown in 1619. You're just now seeing it, or perhaps you've seen it before, but for whatever reason you feel more compelled now. I appreciate your new revelations. However, I'm tired. Literally exhausted of explaining, of teaching, of being angry, of being sad, of being numb, of seeing another Black life gone — selfishly hoping and praying someone I love isn't next. I'm out of answers, and frankly I (we) shouldn't have to come up with them. This seed was sowed by you, figure it out.

Christina Parle
Director of Chapter Services and Conduct, Zeta Beta Tau Fraternity

> *"Then they came for the Socialists*
> *And I did not speak out*
> *Because I was not a Socialist*
>
> *Then they came for the Jews*
> *And I did not speak out*
> *Because I was not a Jew*
>
> *Then they came for me*
> *And there was no one left*
> *To speak out for me"*
>
> *Abridged version of the original quote*

So your statements … your Facebook and Instagram posts … your #BlackoutTuesday are nice, and they are not enough. I/We need all non-Black people to act. Disrupt and interrupt problematic behavior — big or small, out in the open and behind closed doors. Protect Black people, your Black students, your Black colleagues. If you don't show up now, there may be no one left to fight for you later.

Chris Graham
Director of Fraternity and Sorority Life, Florida State University

To my non-Black colleagues and friends, I want you to know that what many of you are just starting to see, realize, and understand has been my lived experience my entire life. I hope each of you move from just sharing statements, to real substantive action. Doing nothing is not a solution!

The opportunity we have is not new, but it is unique. Seize the moment to challenge and change the systematic and problematic systems that continue to kill, harm, and hurt Black men and women. At the end of the day, each of us will be judged not only by what we do and don't say, but ultimately by what we do. When the universe takes its turn to shine a light on your actions, what will we see?

Veronica H. Moore
Director of Educational Programs, Delta Upsilon Fraternity

I want white AFA professionals to know that is not my job to teach you about the injustice against Black folks in this country. Racial battle fatigue is real, and I'm tired of my words and the words of my Black peers falling on deaf ears. Keep the fluff words and start doing the work to dismantle the white supremacist constructs of this country. Also, it's okay to say and refer to me as … Black.

To my non-white POC, marginalized identities are marginalized identities. You don't get to choose which level of discrimination and oppression applies to your life. When one hurts we all hurt. Your silence equates to acceptance. Stand up and speak out.

Lawrence Ross
Author/Lecturer of Blackballed: The Black & White Politics of Race on America's Campuses

Often, I feel like white AFA professionals are too comfortable with simply being aware of the issues. It's like they understand all of the terms, the philosophies, and they're trying to be more woke than their most non-woke white professionals. But there's still a lack of courage when it comes to truly deconstructing the system that often denigrates and marginalizes Black, Latinx, Native American, and Asian American students. I hear all of the excuses for non-action, including lack of power, resources, etc. But at some point, you've got to ask yourself, "Are you about action or not?" Taking action requires risk. If not, you're just pantomiming. I'm always looking, and taking note, of those who take those risks for change. Those are the AFA professionals who make an impact.

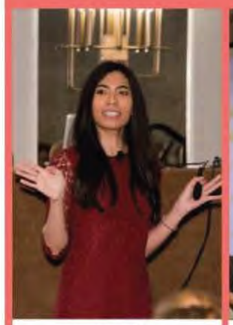
We Are Excited to Share the Opening of Tran Arrowsmith PLLC with Our Fraternal Siblings and Friends

Tran Arrowsmith

Tran Arrowsmith PLLC is a newly formed law firm serving the fraternity/sorority community, with a special focus on culturally based fraternal organizations (CBFOs). Because of our diverse backgrounds and experiences, we are committed to analyzing legal issues through an intersectional lens, which is critical as our campuses and organizations become increasingly diverse.

We provide subscription-based, outside general counsel services for fraternal organizations, in addition to flat-fee package options to fit your organization's specific needs.

Meet Our Team



Stevie V. Tran
Partner (she/her)
Stevie@tranarrowsmith.com
(602) 903-5027

Rasheed Ali Cromwell
Of Counsel (he/him)
Rasheed@tranarrowsmith.com
(623) 252-3788

Nathan T. Arrowsmith
Partner (he/him)
Nathan@tranarrowsmith.com
(602) 903-5097

We are also thrilled to announce that **Rasheed Ali Cromwell** has joined our firm's fraternity/sorority law practice, bringing over a decade of experience speaking, training, and consulting CBFOs in addition to his diverse legal experience.

Our team looks forward to serving you in some the following areas:

- Associational rights
- Chapter investigations and membership reviews
- Contract drafting and review
- Diversity and inclusion
- Intellectual property
- Internal governance, including governing documents, bylaws, and policies
- Outside general counsel services
- Risk management
- Transgender and nonbinary membership

Join us for an upcoming, free webinar on the recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions on LGBT discrimination and DACA and how they impact fraternal organizations. More info HERE!

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What's Your Perspective?

Throughout the process of developing this issue of Perspectives, our world has been rapidly shifting. As such, the concept of timely and relevant content has proven to be a moving target. When we initially decided upon a topic for What's Your Perspective, we asked AFA members to reflect upon what they had learned through the experience of responding to COVID-19 and the transition of higher education to a virtual environment [Question A]. After the tragic murder of George Floyd and the subsequent reaction throughout society it became clear that a moment of deep introspection was occurring. Therefore, we decided to go back to you, our readers and AFA members, to consider a new prompt. This time we asked you to reflect on what it would look like to dismantle systemic oppression within the fraternity and sorority experience. Regarding race, what would a truly antiracist professional industry and member experience look like ... one that moves beyond mere inclusion to establishing a true sense of belonging and equity for all [Question B]?

When it came time for publication, we decided that both prompts remain relevant to our professional worlds, and they are likely to remain so for a long time. So, we decided to publish the responses to both prompts in this issue's What's Your Perspective. We want to express our deep appreciation for our contributors who were willing to share their insights with us in this space and to help us all learn from their experiences as we jointly navigate what could possibly be the most challenging time period of our careers.

Phoebe Galbraith
Delta Phi Epsilon Sorority
Coordinator of Organizational Growth

[Question B] As a Black, biracial woman and member of an NPC sorority, the oppressive systems in place benefited and harmed me during my time as an undergraduate member. As a legacy (a major benefit afforded to me because my mother and grandmother are white), I was placed at the top of my chapter's bid list. I was also elected to serve as president of my chapter and worked hard to create a positive, empowering experience for my sisters. Through that position I had the opportunity to serve on committees, task forces, and in other elite roles reserved for campus leaders. At the same time, I was the epitome of a token member, used as an example for my chapter and campus to prove we were diverse and didn't discriminate. I was subject to countless microaggressions within my chapter and the larger campus community, by people I considered friends and even those I looked up to.

In reflecting upon my own experience, and when I think about what a truly anti-racist member experience would look like within a historically white organization, my first thought is it wouldn't look like much at all. As much as I understand and advocate for the benefits of the fraternal experience, I also know almost every aspect of that experience is tied to systemic oppression. An anti-racist experience would mean changing every single piece of the fraternity/sorority experience as we know it … nothing can remain the same. To begin, we must acknowledge our wrongdoings, educate members about them, and teach them ways to be better. We have to strike a balance between honoring our founding while being brave enough to change our traditions. We must ingrain anti-racist education into member education — beyond just diversity and inclusion. We must ask members to commit to creating an equitable experience and hold them accountable if they don't.

The bigger question is, are we ready? Are we ready to acknowledge our founders were racist? Are we ready to teach our members about race, equity, and privilege through our curriculum? Are you — as a professional — really ready to dismantle the system that benefited you for so many years and likely continues to do so?

For many of us, our answer is yes. We feel ready and we, in theory, know the right thing to do. Yet we have arrived at a point where it is no longer good enough for us to simply know the right thing to do — we must actually do it. We do not have time to waste. Anti-racism starts now, and it starts with you. Stop and bring awareness to your students and colleagues when they are racist. Re-write your programs. Post your educational content for someone other than your friends. Advocate for your students and colleagues of color. Amplify their voices and work. Admit when you are wrong and commit to doing better. Anything is better than nothing, because we've been doing nothing for far too long.

Jake Tomlin

Delta Chi

Director of Fraternity Services

[Question A] Grace and persistence: two words that have shaped my life over the past several months. I've learned I have to exercise compassion for myself and those around me. Then, when I don't feel successful, I have to commit to trying again tomorrow.

No one wrote the playbook on how to direct chapter support for 113 entities during a global pandemic. No crisis management chapter of a graduate school textbook asked me "what if..?" or prepared me for this. Every day is unknown, every day brings new challenges, every day I ask myself am I doing too much, am I not doing enough, do I have the answers? Each day involves bargaining with how I'm going to show up for others while remembering that I am human and have to show up for myself too. And, on the flip side, reminding myself to be grateful that I'm here, that I'm working, that I am a part of a team that cares, and that we are giving our all to figure it out and find solutions, despite the uncertainty of what the future holds.

What I do know now, is we will get through this. I remind myself daily that our organizations have become what they are today through adversity, with less support, and fewer passionate individuals dedicated to showing up for our members. There has always been so much work to be done, and these days it feels like there is that much more.

For now, we exercise compassion and continue to try again tomorrow.

Nicole Belinsky, M.Ed.

Delta Upsilon Fraternity

Director of Chapter Development and Conduct

[Question A & B] "Normal" is relative. When the COVID-19 outbreak began, my immediate reaction to potential changes it might cause within higher education was disbelief. Actually, I naively assumed many students would be excited not to return to school following spring break. I remember wondering if students would consider remote learning a head start on summer, celebrating greater independence and autonomy. I figured students would easily remain connected via the technology Generation Z has proven itself to be so well-versed in.

Fortunately, most of my assumptions were wrong. The past several months have shown morale is low, professional opportunities are limited, and many students feel academically short-changed. This pandemic prompts the question of how students of this traditional college-aged generation will adapt and rise given the commonly-held generalization that Generation Z lacks resilience. The post-pandemic rebuild will be telling. Perhaps students will rise and prove grittier than ever as they finish their studies and enter the workforce. Or, perhaps a lack of grit will be evident as the fall term unfolds. Many — if not all — answers remain to be seen. All I know is I must choose optimism and believe students will want to return to school, will adapt to hybrid learning, and graduating seniors will persist and find success in their job searches. My hope is Generation Z proves to be resilient and gritty as an outcome of COVID-19, and that such grit becomes a "new normal." While I may have wrongly assumed the Generation Z reaction to COVID-19, I am abundantly optimistic in how this generation of students and young people will pursue the advancement of social justice and change. While not entirely universal, through technology, heightened focus within education, and increasing emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion within public and private spaces, this is a generation exposed to the concept of intersectionality and the inherent beauty and necessity of diversity. This is a generation that grew up aware of and fearful of violence — physical, mental and emotional — and learned boldness and activism is the only path to safety. This is a generation with more access to and understanding of social constructs and systemic barriers, how they're created, and how they devalue human dignity and inhibit or block people from achieving their fullest potentials. While not perfect, this is a generation with increased capacity to see and champion a human being's inherent worth and challenge systems to ensure that worth is seen, uplifted, rewarded, and celebrated.

It is impossible for me not to be optimistic knowing traditionally-aged college students are approaching a presidential and — perhaps even more valuable — local election where they can vote for change. Due to the ever-present nature of technology, I hope many within Generation Z will not vote as they are told or as their parents or grandparents might. I hope they will invest in understanding candidate platforms and becoming informed about what they agree to with a vote for local legislation. Technology will be used to inform and direct the current generation's vote while simultaneously serving as a platform for advocating for what they believe in. The Black Lives Matter movement has been and will continue to be propelled in part because of social media and the ability for instant connection. Members of Generation Z are challenging those within their communities with higher degrees of privilege and lesser degrees of understanding to see and seek to know the injustices around them. Injustices they likely participate in and help to perpetuate daily.

The combination of COVID-19 and horrifying deaths of Black individuals at the hands of white citizens has likely impacted members of Generation Z in ways that will be ingrained in their perspectives and memories forever, potentially informing the trajectories of the rest of their lives. I admire Generation Z. They have called millennials, Generation X, and baby boomers — especially white Americans within those generations — to be better and do more. They are having hard and important conversations and embracing the concept that only challenge can lead to change. Generation Z's verve to move America forward to value health, safety, and equity for all should awaken older generations. And in this moment of uncertainty, it reminds me to never stop doing the hard work, to cease making assumptions, and to give those of future generations the benefit of the doubt, as they're the individuals carving our path forward.

Nicki Rowlett

Triangle Fraternity

Director of Leadership Programs

[Question B] To My White Colleagues … We've Known Better

We must come to terms with the fact our history has led us to where we are today. Every historically-white fraternity and sorority is rooted in white supremacy — period. Whether or not we subscribe to those ideals is irrelevant because we perpetuate them. It's plain and simple. I refuse to believe we do not see the inequities within our industry. We spend thousands of dollars on speakers that talk about these issues. It's all over the NASPA Fraternity & Sorority Knowledge Community Facebook page. We are aware of what's going on, but we refuse to address it. Until we understand and own our part in the oppressive systems that exist, we will not be able to dismantle them.

Picture this. I was serving as a facilitator for UIFI. After receiving the list of students in each group, another facilitator leaned over and said "Do you think someone would switch groups with me? I have a member of [insert NPHC organization here], and I don't know anything about that." I was appalled. This professional had been in the industry for more than 10 years. I thought to myself "How did he advance without knowing that?" The answer is he didn't have to. Ask yourself when you first noticed there were issues of inequity in our industry. How did you act? Why does that matter?

Fraternity and sorority professionals are a product of a fraternity and sorority experience that has perpetuated an inequitable environment for more than a century. We cannot expect students to engage in this work if we are not willing to. Let's face it — we create our own 'red tape' when it comes to addressing anti-racism mentalities in our organizations. We use alumni, certain structures and politics as ways to pivot the truth that we are not willing to address these injustices ourselves. The 13th amendment did not eliminate inequities and neither will our diversity and inclusion committees. Our work needs to be intentional and we need to remain committed to it beyond stand-alone programs and one-off statements condemning racial injustice.

First, we need to stop policing Black professionals. Many denounce police brutality on Facebook but fail to realize one's own actions that police Black professionals in this industry. A Black colleague once told me he was docked in a performance evaluation for his "inability to manage his time" because Black students were spending "too much time in his office." That is policing, and we are doing it without badges and batons.

We must define the promotional pipeline for Black professionals and invest in their advancement within this industry. This means changing job descriptions to account for inequities in our organizations. We must stop normalizing majority language with regard to experiences (i.e. leadership consultants). As a supervisor, you cannot pigeonhole Black professionals into roles to primarily work with Black students. Additionally, we must

look seriously at staff structures and allocation of resources. Black professionals in this industry are notoriously underpaid and under titled. Nothing says "we value Black lives" like paying the one Black staff member less than everyone else and justifying it because of their coordinator title. Let's think about that the next time we use #BlackLivesMatter on a Facebook post.

It is not enough to be aware and educated on this topic. We must prioritize it. While there are always multiple priorities in our work, we can walk and chew gum at the same time. We've known better. It's time we actually do better. In the famous words of Jane Elliott, "You know what's happening. You know you don't want it for yourself. So why are you so willing to accept it and allow it to happen to others?"

Fred Dobry
Sigma Nu Fraternity
Director of Health and Safety

[Question A] Six years ago, I began working from home. Three years ago, I transitioned to the newly created director of health and safety position at Sigma Nu. Three months ago, I, along with the rest of our community, had to learn on-the-fly how to do almost everything differently.

I thrive on certainty. I know a lot about the harm reduction behaviors I attempt to impact through the projects I lead. Or, at least I thought I knew a lot. Then, I was confronted by the coronavirus. Despite more hours spent on webinars, reading articles, and talking with subject matter experts than I care to count, I still feel relatively uncertain on what I know about the virus and the research-based prevention strategies that will be effective for college students. To help cope with this environment of uncertainty, I have adopted a mantra: Be comfortable with being uncomfortable. In other words, accept the challenge and work through the uncomfortable feeling of uncertainty to find solutions.

I recall a similar feeling and thought process after my first time attending the Interdisciplinary Institute for Hazing Prevention. I had recently become director of risk reduction and was trying to figure out how I could eliminate hazing. Please note: I was 24 at the time and during my interview told our executive director my goal was to achieve our founders' vision of a hazing-free fraternity experience. I may have been a bit naïve when I first took on the role.

After attending the Institute, I felt I had a research-based framework to begin tackling the problem, but it still seemed daunting and overwhelming. Where to begin? What could I really get done? What do I know? What don't I know? Slowly, over time, I began identifying small pieces to focus on. The once daunting problem became more manageable. I'm not arguing in any way we have figured out how to effectively prevent hazing, but I do feel more confident in knowing how to learn more about the problem of hazing and using that knowledge to design and implement effective prevention strategies.

Flash forward to the 2020 coronavirus pandemic. My 24-year-old self would say my job is to prevent anyone in Sigma Nu from contracting the coronavirus. That is unrealistic and, as I have learned through many lessons, we simply cannot control the behavior of others nor is it wise to attempt. However, we can lead the development and implementation of effective and research-based harm reduction strategies. Similar to how I began approaching hazing prevention, it starts with focusing on small pieces of the larger problem (e.g. increasing member understanding of how to properly wash their hands, increasing peer support for wearing masks). And as time goes on, we will gain increased understanding and confidence in equipping students with the skills and knowledge to make healthy choices to prevent the transmission of the coronavirus.

Remember, we are not alone. The entire world is working to learn more about this virus and how to effectively prevent its continued transmission. Join the team, become comfortable with being uncomfortable and let's attack this pandemic piece by piece.

a Perspectives

Contribute to AFA Perspectives!

Contact the 2020 Editors to submit your ideas:

Brooke Goodman
brookegoodman01@gmail.com

Noah Borton
borton@deltau.org

AFA1976.ORG

FIRST 90 DAYS

First 90 Days is designed for those entering their first, full-time professional role within fraternity/sorority advising and are eager to improve themselves so they may better serve those they lead.

PROGRAM START DATE: The week of September 14th, 2020

PROGRAM FACILITATORS:

Arthur Doctor, Jr., Ed.D.
Director of Fraternity & Sorority Life,
The University of Mississippi

Jess Turuc
Director of Fraternity & Sorority Life,
University of Utah

REGISTRATION OPEN NOW

This program is made possible through a generous gift from Sigma Chi Fraternity to the AFA Foundation

SHOW ME YOUR POLICIES AND I'LL VERIFY YOUR STATEMENT

HAILEY MANGRUM

"Show me your best friends and I'll tell you who you are." A similar proverbial message is shared within the fraternity/sorority industry about values alignment. It suggests by your life's work, everyday behaviors and presence, others should have an inkling of your membership with a fraternal organization. The same is true about racism.

In May and June of 2020, many campuses, councils, and inter/national organizations released a surge of statements affirming support, defending justice, and condemning racism. Amidst this, I couldn't help but wonder how these entities were denouncing and condemning the same systems in which they maintained their existence. Many statements failed to mention how they are part of the problem. Instead of addressing issues within infrastructure, mapping out systemic changes they could work toward, and/or providing strategy rooted in action, statements focused on words such as respect, kindness, grace, and love. None of these sentiments can address the actual problem — receipts from these same campuses, councils, and inter/national organizations in the form of staffing models, membership demographics, curriculum, allocation of funding/resources, programs, and generic history on the development of fraternity and sorority tell us otherwise.

Frankly, the fraternity/sorority industry has a responsibility to be actively anti-racist because the industry is, in fact, the system to which it exists.

LITTLE R, BIG R

"Little r, Big R" is a conceptual framework utilized in various leadership curricula to facilitate discussion regarding perceptions and interactions with ritual. "Little r" ritual refers to daily behaviors in routines we hardly give thought to — it's simply our norm. Actions such as washing your face, brushing your teeth, applying lotion before clothes, or vice versa are examples of "Little r." "Big R" is interpreted as the actual ritual book and/or ritualistic ceremonies for induction and initiation. The intended goal of this lesson is for members to infuse principles of their everyday fraternity or sorority ritual (Little r) into daily action rather than think of ritual as a one-time occurrence (Big R). This same philosophy applies to racism.

The murders of George Floyd, Tony McDade, Breonna Taylor, Michael Brown, and countless others at the hands of police officers were the result of "Little r" racism, yet some may only see them as isolated events. "Little r" racism is displayed through natural habitual behaviors in the form of microaggressive comments and jokes, physical reactions, and assumptions of racial inferiority. On the other hand, "Big R" racism may be perceived as Jim Crow Laws or a thing of the past. While some might think that, the reality is racism is camouflaged through tone policing in the workplace, stop and frisk in the police force, and gentrification in neighborhoods. Racism isn't always physically or verbally violent — it occurs mostly in thoughts, ideas, and perceptions. It also lives within fraternity and sorority recruitment processes, hiring procedures, and educational experiences.

Moving beyond inclusion begins with dismantling racism. We cannot operationally address sexism, homophobia, feminism, or any other ism without addressing the very thing deemed political, impolite, and negative to discuss. At the end of the day, race is the one intersecting aspect of identity within every culture and grouping of people.

Accountability forces us to evaluate and confirm the validity of these statements. Similar to contacting an applicant's references in a hiring process to confirm and expound their experiences working alongside the applicant, we must do the same. How do your members or students perceive your statement? What would they say aligns with or contradicts the content of the statement? Much like the flow of a statement, consider the following to begin systematically addressing racism with your office, inter/national organization, or other entity.

THE MESSAGE

Being anti-racist means to admit the problem. Not deny, diffuse, or negate. It requires taking responsibility for upholding, maintaining, and sustaining a culture that allows for racism to live. Entities must consistently and clearly outline their plans to strategically address racism within the structure of their overall being. Rather than naming a program under a generic umbrella of diversity and inclusion, consider naming race verbatim in the title, description, policy, and goals. In everyday practice and in thinking about organizational charts and division of responsibilities, comments and hierarchical thinking that alludes to councils that are culturally based as challenging to advise/work with simply due to one's own lack of competence is problematic at best and an example of "Little r" tendencies.

The phrase "become comfortable with being uncomfortable" may sound cliche, and yet is still a reality. The ability to lean into "difficult conversations" (caveat: to whose standard is the dialogue actually difficult?) and be vulnerable offers opportunities to engage in authentic growth. It allows a weight representing shame and guilt to be lifted and in turn, welcomes a presence of bravery and courage. It's imperative for one to take

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OR ANY OTHER ISM WITHOUT ADDRESSING THE VERY THING DEEMED POLITICAL, IMPOLITE AND NEGATIVE TO DISCUSS.

ownership when they fumble, say the wrong thing, or just outright mess up. While it can be embarrassing, it shows leadership and maturity when the behavior is self-corrected. Name the issues and actively work to change them within the messaging of leadership internally and externally.

RATHER THAN NAMING A PROGRAM UNDER A GENERIC UMBRELLA OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION, CONSIDER NAMING RACE **VERBATIM** IN THE TITLE, DESCRIPTION, POLICY AND GOALS.

THE CULTURE

Many professionals and entities strive to be inclusive and in their hearts want to be inclusive, yet the quantitative and qualitative data show us otherwise. Demographics, results, and the stories people share regarding their experiences are measures to which inclusion exists. Take the example of hosting recruitment in a facility with stairs and limited accessible entry points. Maybe the rationale of using this space is due to historical, habitual practices and it would be too complicated to secure another venue. The reactionary response could include creating a specific plan for audience members who need to take a different route within that facility, subsequently altering their experience to their counterparts. Proactive and authentic inclusion would demand an accessible venue and wouldn't even consider an inaccessible facility without a plan to redesign the space to meet the needs of all audience members — regardless of who actually registers.

Don't just express a desire to be inclusive — actually commit to being inclusive. Inclusion requires intention. Intention requires critical thought and persistent action. For example, hiring more people of color won't solve issues related to inclusion. An entity can hire all the people of color they want into a flawed, encrypted system that maintains white supremacy. All that does is put them back at square one. Let me be clear — still hire people of color. And, transform the environment to be conducive for members — in all facets of their identities — to thrive. Internal development is crucial. This means work, experiences, and input are equally valued, recognized, and heard.

One cannot truly be anti anything if they are not working to, in fact, be anti that thing. How are conversations, practices, and behaviors woven into the fabric of your team's existence and operations? What rules exist that create pathways for some to advance while others remain stagnant? Identify barriers and inequities as they relate to resources, opportunities, and policies. Be hyper-critical in ensuring policies exist to help advance organizations and people rather than hinder and police them. Training every now and then is cool. And, an agenda item, culture shift, and intentional space for accountability is even better. This requires learning, unlearning, and more learning. This requires real relationships with people different from you. This requires a commitment to leading with a lens that doesn't center on your lived experiences, but rather understanding the lens of those you intend to serve.

THE MONEY

What you are willing to accept or refuse is evident in the investment of financial resources and time spent by an organization's leadership. Readjusting the financial gap and disparities within councils, people, programmatic efforts, and professional development are crucial to shifting the narrative. One of my best friends, Demetrias Wolverton, once said it's easy for organizations and people to donate and go on about their lives without actually taking the necessary steps to shift wealth. I think he was on to something.

A seat at the table provides a responsibility to dismantle, readjust, and transform the resources and opportunities available to the communities you serve. To take it a step further, offering scholarships without an application requirement may seem radical in academia, but it removes a barrier to entry of someone essentially being required to prove their worth to someone else's standards, when they probably already met the initial criteria to apply in the first place. Investing organizational funds in contracting external professionals for internal development rather than relying on your members of color to educate everyone removes the disparity of an emotional toll. Again, this requires strategy rooted in intention. Maintaining a staffing model in which professionals that advise CBFOs are only at the coordinator or graduate assistant level is indicative of value and perspective of what professional type or level should work with said councils or types of organizations. Beyond the title and job responsibilities, consider auditing and analyzing pay equity within your structure to ensure closure of the racial pay gap.

Entities with staff of color who are taxed to educate, advise, or show up for "can I pick your brain?" requests about racial issues must do better. Those requests are not part of their job responsibilities or position description. So, again. Do better. Pay them. Give them the raise they rightfully deserve. History tells us people of color — more specifically Black women — often play the role of fixer, problem solver, and strategist while simultaneously existing lowest on the hierarchical ladder in title and pay. In my own professional experiences, I have countlessly found myself serving as an educational source, trainer, and/or internal consultant to supervisors, executives, or professionals at higher levels than me, yet met with less compensation, advancement, and credit in return. In some cases when I refused to engage to protect my inner peace or on the flip side, chose to hold staff accountable, I was documented or reprimanded. In a specific example (where I already made less than my white counterpart), I did not qualify for a raise because of a low evaluation score stating (among other preferential cultural characteristics I didn't assimilate to), I valued accountability and was "direct, blunt, and brutally honest." That was the case even though every ounce of progress made that year was a result of me pushing back on an inequitable practice, someone "picking my brain," or an innovative initiative I created, facilitated, and nurtured. This story isn't unique to my experiences. This is solely one example of how some Black professionals are hyper-aware of their identity and expected to perform their daily duties, while also meeting subconscious expectations to advance internal diversity and inclusion efforts, all with a eurocentric approach of being polite, kind, smiling, and overly gracious.

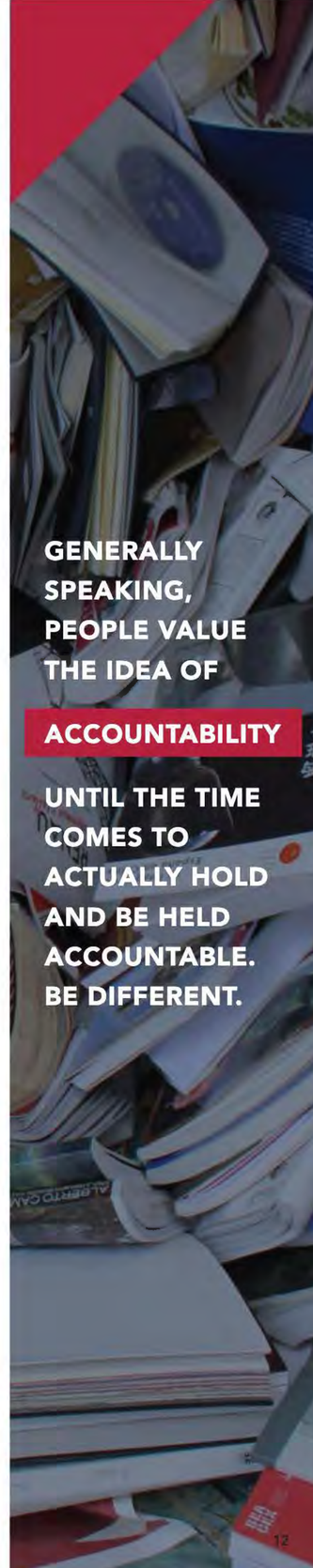
That same entity I was reprimanded by released a statement denouncing all forms of hate and urging others to step up and speak out when people aren't living their values. The irony of my attempt to do just that was systematically met with ineligibility for equitable pay. Generally speaking, people value the idea of accountability until the time comes to actually hold and be held accountable. Be different.

This societal metamorphosis will demand for a transformed framework in the industry. Ask yourself: in what ways am I leveraging my role in my organization to actively advance equity, dismantle white supremacy, and reject notions of prejudice in the environment to be anti-racist?

Your statement is in vain, if you can't retain staff members of color. It's obsolete, if your staff is majority white and lacks competence or the infrastructure to gain competence on cultures, communities, and organizations other than its own. It means nothing, if Black and brown team members are policed for tone of voice, pushing back, addressing a concern, or by way of showing up and merely existing. Rethink policies. Name your problem before someone else does. Transform the environment your team works in every single day. End financial disparities and pay people what they deserve. Commit and infuse the message articulated in your statement into normative "Little r" behaviors. Then — and only then — by design, will your statement be verified.

Hailey Mangrum
Phired Up Productions
Organizational Growth Consultant

Hailey Mangrum serves as an organizational growth consultant for Phired Up Productions. As a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, she is dedicated to social justice, advocacy, and increasing cultural competence and understanding within the industry. Hailey has a passion for creating spaces and opportunities in which people can make meaning of their multifaceted identities.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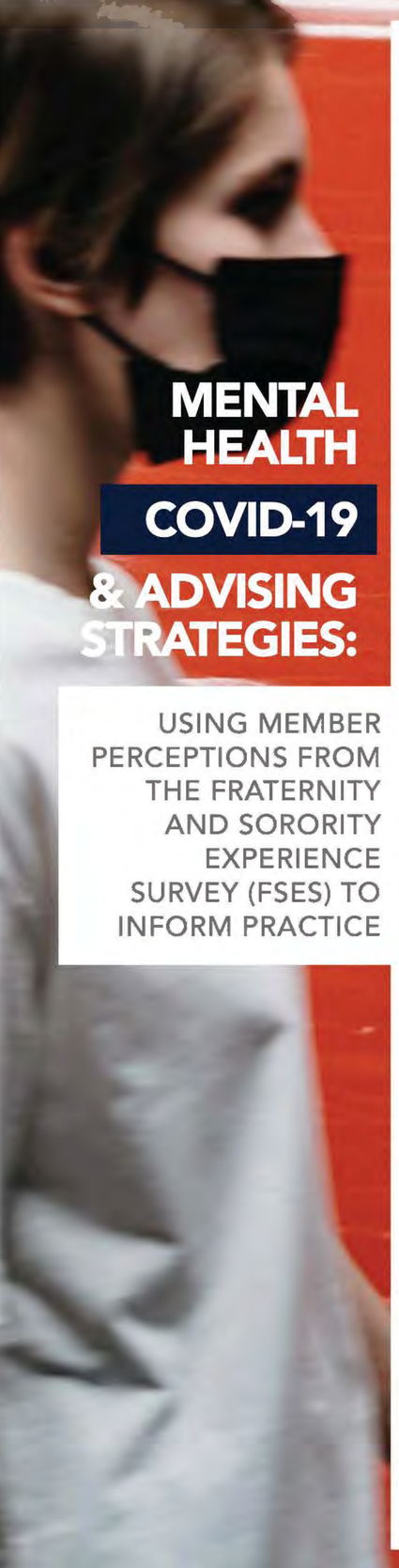


MENTAL HEALTH COVID-19 & ADVISING STRATEGIES:

USING MEMBER PERCEPTIONS FROM THE FRATERNITY AND SORORITY EXPERIENCE SURVEY (FSES) TO INFORM PRACTICE

DAWN MAYNEN

COVID-19 is a global pandemic disrupting the educational environment. Colleges and universities are reacting through remote online learning, closing student housing, and other methods to ensure student success while keeping students healthy. Most fraternity and sorority communities, if not all, were impacted in ways such as suspension of activities, required changes to chapter operations, and facility closures through the end of the academic year. This disconnect may cause students to feel isolated and not supported in the ways they were prior to the COVID-19 crisis.

The Piazza Center asked Dan Welter, director for fraternity/sorority life at Washington State University; Megan Ceppi, coordinator of fraternity/sorority life at California State University-San Marcos; and Ross Szabo, wellness director, Geffen Academy at UCLA and CEO of the Human Power Project, to reflect on member perspectives from the FSES data while considering this crisis. Four questions were selected for commentary including advising strategies, activities, and interventions. The Piazza Center selected these questions to represent the mindset of members pre-COVID-19 and how data may be applied within this crisis. The four thematic areas include:

1. Reasons for membership in a fraternity or sorority
2. Whether mental health was an issue in chapters
3. Quality of mental health programming in chapters
4. Individual bystander intervention in the chapter

This data was based on 25,496 fraternity & sorority members during the 2018-2019 academic year.[1] The data was broken down by council and member types for a more in-depth analysis.

FSES DATA: WHY ARE YOU A MEMBER?

The reasons students joined a fraternity or sorority varied by council. For IFC organizations, 77 percent joined for friendship, 47 percent for social opportunities, and 45 percent for leadership development. Similarly, in PHA organizations, 82 percent joined for friendship, 41 percent for social opportunities, and 41 percent for a home away from home. For MGC organizations, 49 percent joined for friendship, 46 percent joined for leadership development, and 37 percent for academic support. In a comparison of NPHC organizations, 62 percent joined for philanthropy and community service, 61 percent for leadership development, and 43 percent for career networking. Though friendships were the main reason for membership in three of four councils, the emphasis shifted to personal development for culturally based councils. (See Table 1 for all reasons by council).

Table 1: Reasons for Joining by Council Percent 'Yes'

	IFC	PHA	MGC	NPHC
Friendships	77	82	49	33
Social Opportunities	47	41	27	16
Leadership Development	45	36	46	61
Career Networking	44	22	33	43
Academic Support	27	17	37	12
Home Away from Home	22	41	34	10
Philanthropy/Community Service	17	39	27	62
Cultural Support	02	01	29	30
Legacy/Tradition	06	06	03	22

[1] 16,847 were female, 4,939 were male, 36 identified as a gender other than male or female, and 3,674 did not respond. For race/ethnicity, 75% identified as White or Caucasian, 6% Hispanic or Latino, 5% Asian, 2% as Black or African American, and 4% identified as other ethnicities (American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; Middle Eastern or North African or other ethnicities not listed).

REFLECTIONS UPON MEMBER RESPONSES

Dan: As we look toward a recruiting season vastly different from the past, it is critical to ground ourselves in understanding what motivates people to engage in these rigorous processes. Allowing students to develop more nuanced talking points and recruitment messaging will be central to meeting the needs of incoming students. High school seniors are researching and exploring organizations digitally, providing more opportunity for students to hone their messages and meet students in a variety of different places.

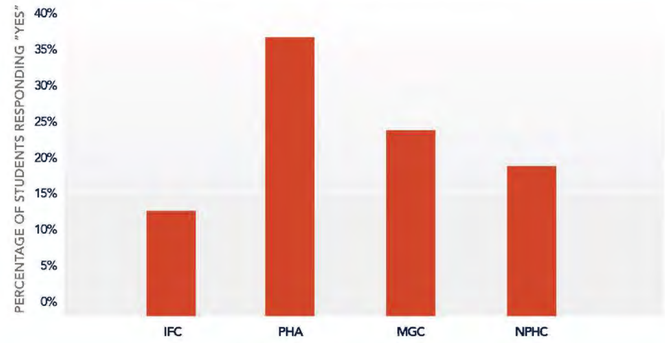
Megan: It's critical to look at data on why students choose to join fraternities and sororities. We can use data to inform programming and be innovative to meet those needs. It's also worthwhile to note co-creating with student leaders will be a valuable asset now more than ever. Students can tell student affairs professionals what will go over well and what might not in the virtual environment. Connect why students join with what is possible during this time:

- *Friendships/social opportunities/home away from home – encourage sisterhood/brotherhood chairs to host virtual gatherings to create that space (movie nights, fitness classes, team builders, game night, meditations, virtual escape rooms, etc.)*
- *Leadership development – host workshops that would typically be held and new and innovative programs, promote virtual training that we have access to that we normally would not*
- *Academic support – promote on campus academic support resources, share updates about policy changes, encourage chapters to continue academic support plans for members virtually*
- *Philanthropy and community service – support small service initiatives like writing letters and cards to folks in healthcare*
- *Career networking – promote Career Center virtual events*

FSES DATA: MENTAL HEALTH IN THE CHAPTER

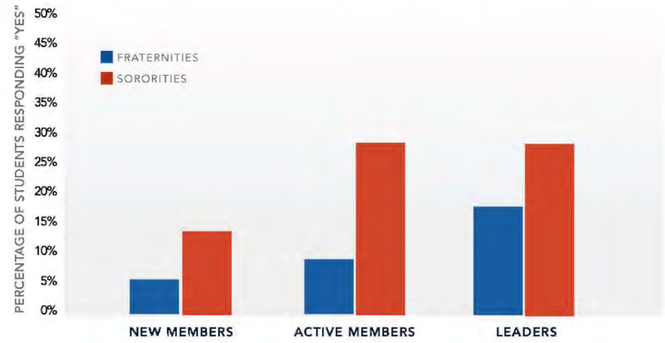
Members were asked whether mental health was an issue in their chapter. 36 percent of members in PHA organizations stated it was an issue in their chapters, followed by 24 percent in MGC, 18 percent in NPHC, and 13 percent in IFC organizations, respectively (See Figure 1).

Figure 1: Mental Health as an Issue by Council



A closer examination of these percentages by membership status for fraternities and sororities indicate a different story. For new members, only 5 percent of new fraternity members and 14 percent of new sorority members stated mental health was an issue in their chapter. In comparison, 9 percent of active fraternity members and 28 percent of sorority members cited mental health as an issue in their chapter. Finally, 18 percent of leaders in fraternities and 43 percent in sororities stated mental health was an issue in their chapters (See Figure 2). The low reporting for new members may be attributed to less time in the organization or less exposure to all chapter members. The higher percentages cited by chapter leaders — either as an executive board or committee member — may be attributed to their formal leadership roles in the chapter. Chapter leaders have often been in the organization longer, have more exposure to chapter members, and receive concerns about members or violations of chapter policies from other members and/or the university.

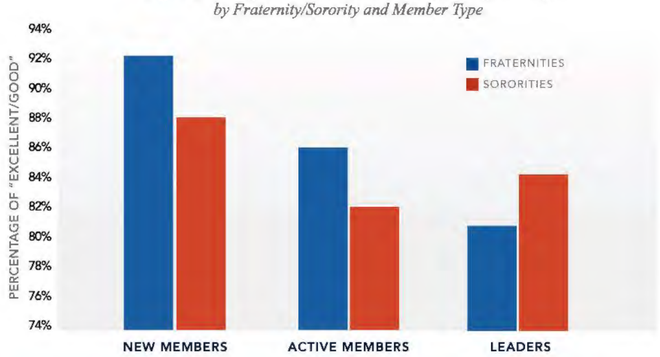
Figure 2: Mental Health an Issue by Fraternity/Sorority and Member Type



FSES DATA: MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMMING IN THE CHAPTER

Participants were asked to rate mental health awareness programming as excellent/good within their chapters. All councils were within 6 percentage points of another; IFC = 84 percent, PHA = 84 percent, MGC = 78 percent, and NPHC = 80 percent. When the data between new/active/leader members was analyzed, a greater disparity in perceptions was found between new fraternity members and leaders; 92 percent and 81 percent, respectively. For sorority members, the largest disparity was between new and active sorority members; 88 percent and 82 percent (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Ratings of Mental Health Awareness Programming by Fraternity/Sorority and Member Type



REFLECTIONS UPON MEMBER RESPONSES

Dan: Since the onset of the COVID-19 public health crisis, I have noticed a meaningful trend in chapter leaders asking for additional time and resources to be allocated to mental health. In alignment with the data, I have seen these requests primarily coming from Panhellenic women. I suspect as we return to campus, students will have an increased need for the social connection that exists within fraternal organizations and for mental health resources that support their overall wellbeing. As we move out of this crisis, our organizations will be forever changed, and I suspect the organizations that will be strongest will be the organizations that can bring members' mental health needs to the forefront.

Megan: Student leaders are more privy to mental health challenges within their chapters, and the data speaks to that knowledge. Engaging student leaders, ensuring they check in on their members, and ensuring we check in on them are essential touchpoints if we cannot physically see each other to observe behaviors.

Ross: As we look at the mental health data from this study, we need to celebrate the positives and be aware of how to support those in need. It's encouraging to see how many members feel mental health awareness and programming is adequate in their chapters. This generation of college students often has the lowest levels of stigma surrounding help-seeking behavior for mental health. Members are in environments where they may not receive as much judgment for seeking help, but that doesn't mean everyone is comfortable getting the help they need. There is a gap between the percentage of fraternity and sorority leaders who see mental health as an issue and the members' point of view. Fraternity and sorority leaders are often under a higher level of stress as they try to balance school and their roles in the organization.

Simply stated, it is time to move past doing mental health awareness in organizations and start using programs that teach members and leaders skills to address mental health challenges. By equipping them with the ability to manage stress, communicate their emotions, and look after each other, we will build stronger bonds of belonging and connection.

FSES DATA: INDIVIDUAL BYSTANDER INTERVENTION

On average, members rated themselves a 4.2 (on a scale of 1-5) on items related to their ability to intervene for others in dangerous or harmful situations. For Chapter Bystander Intervention, members rated their chapter's likelihood to intervene for others slightly lower at 3.6 (on a scale of 1-5).

Member ability to intervene for others in dangerous or harmful situations:

Chapter likelihood to intervene for others in dangerous or harmful situations:

REFLECTIONS UPON MEMBER RESPONSES

Dan: We see organizations working to find "space" inside this crisis to support their members with check-ins, social hours, and hosting online gaming sessions.

Megan: Bystander intervention from the chapter leadership on members' behalf is crucial during this time because advisors are not going to learn about concerns with members through incidents on and off campus as they usually might. Encouraging proactive intervention and asking how students themselves, members, and friends are doing during meetings is vital.

ADVISING STRATEGIES, ACTIVITIES & INTERVENTIONS

In addition to student impact, campus-based faculty and staff tasked with providing support to members are affected. Non-essential employees are required to work off-campus and support students differently. For some, no direct in-person student contact or connections affect how professionals advise members. They share advising strategies, activities, and interventions their offices are using to connect with members or any new guidelines for chapters since they are not on campus.

Dan: Students, organizations, and staff engage in different ways. Some students have evolved into the digital engagement arena seamlessly whereas others have struggled. Among our staff, we have found extraordinary success maintaining our regular advising schedule including weekly one-on-one meetings with executive board members, weekly office updates, and monthly advisor calls. This has helped maintain a sense of stability for students. Creating a variety of how-to resources was initially helpful to provide confidence among chapter leadership to run regular meetings. We found maintaining a regular means of communication by forwarding office phones to home office computers is critical and provides students a sense we are still here. Finally, we found increased intervention in high anxiety producing scenarios is necessary. With student conduct notices going digital, we adapted processes to have a phone call with chapter leadership ahead of the communication going out, to help reduce concern and anxiety and provide context to our students about tone. Early in our digitization process, we learned how critical it is to provide students with tonal context to institutional messages, and we have a responsibility to provide direct communication with students to help them.

Megan: It's much harder to understand how students feel and what they think over the phone. The phone meetings tend to be shorter and straight to the point. The availability for advising sessions on Zoom or other video options is critical.

- *Checking in, both formally and informally, more often with students because we would typically see students in passing, or they would stop into the office.*

  Some formal examples: council meetings once per month over the summer, outreach emails to chapter presidents in between meetings, and articles or virtual training/webinar opportunities.

  Some informal examples: checking in at the beginning of a council meeting, sharing virtual team builder ideas, or sending a quick text.

- *Hosting virtual office hours and sharing availability with students (ex. free Calendly link) so they know we are available and just a meeting request away.*

- *Hosting virtual programming like round tables to discuss chapter engagement in a virtual environment, specific topics like mental health, "how-to" use Zoom info session, and officer transitions.*

- *Sharing resources with councils and chapters and encouraging them to stay connected with campus resources.*

As students detach from traditional campus settings and rhythms, students may feel more disengaged from their chapters and leadership roles. Professionals can use existing data, such as information from the Fraternity and Sorority Experience Survey to help reflect upon their perceptions prior to COVID-19 and find ways to navigate this pandemic.

Dawn Maynen
Penn State Piazza Center
Project Coordinator

Dawn Maynen is the project coordinator for the Penn State Piazza Center. As a Qualtrics certified administrator, Dawn is responsible for the survey administration, client interaction, data analysis, and reporting of the Fraternity and Sorority Experience Survey (FSES). Dawn is finishing her PhD. in higher education/student affairs at Indiana University-Bloomington.

The Pennsylvania State University Piazza Center is focused on research to inform professional practice in fraternity and sorority advising.

HISTORICAL VIEWPOINTS:

THE EVOLUTION OF AFA PERSPECTIVES

"This initial issue, we hope, is the beginning of a long life for this, the first advisor-oriented publication."

The Perspectives editorial board is excited to introduce a new regular short feature that will appear in future issues. With this new feature centered on historical viewpoints within the fraternity and sorority industry, this Perspectives issue presents a great opportunity to explore the publication's history.

The original editorial board of the Fraternity Newsletter:

Jerry Lilly
Kansas State University

Bob Turvey
University of Arkansas

Joe Johnson
University of Oklahoma

Steve Lourie
Western Illinois University

Walt Cieko
University of Delaware

Ron Krum
University of Minnesota
(Treasurer)

Bruce Pitman
University of Idaho

John Douglas
Iowa State University
(Coordinator)

What we now know as Perspectives started as the Fraternity Advisors' Newsletter, originally printed 47 years ago in September 1973. The origin of this very publication — which is now a benefit of membership within the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors — actually predates the Association by three years. The newsletter changed its name by July 1974 to the Fraternity Newsletter.

The inaugural newsletter began with this sentiment:

> *We'd like to welcome all fraternity advisors to the ranks of our readership. This initial issue, we hope, is the beginning of a long life for this, the first advisor-oriented publication.*

The idea for a publication grew out of conversations that occurred at the Interfraternity Institute (IFI). Some attendees felt there was an opportunity to establish better lines of communication among those working as fraternity advisors. The earliest versions of the publication started as print and mail newsletters, costing subscribers $10. By 1974, the cost had risen to $12.

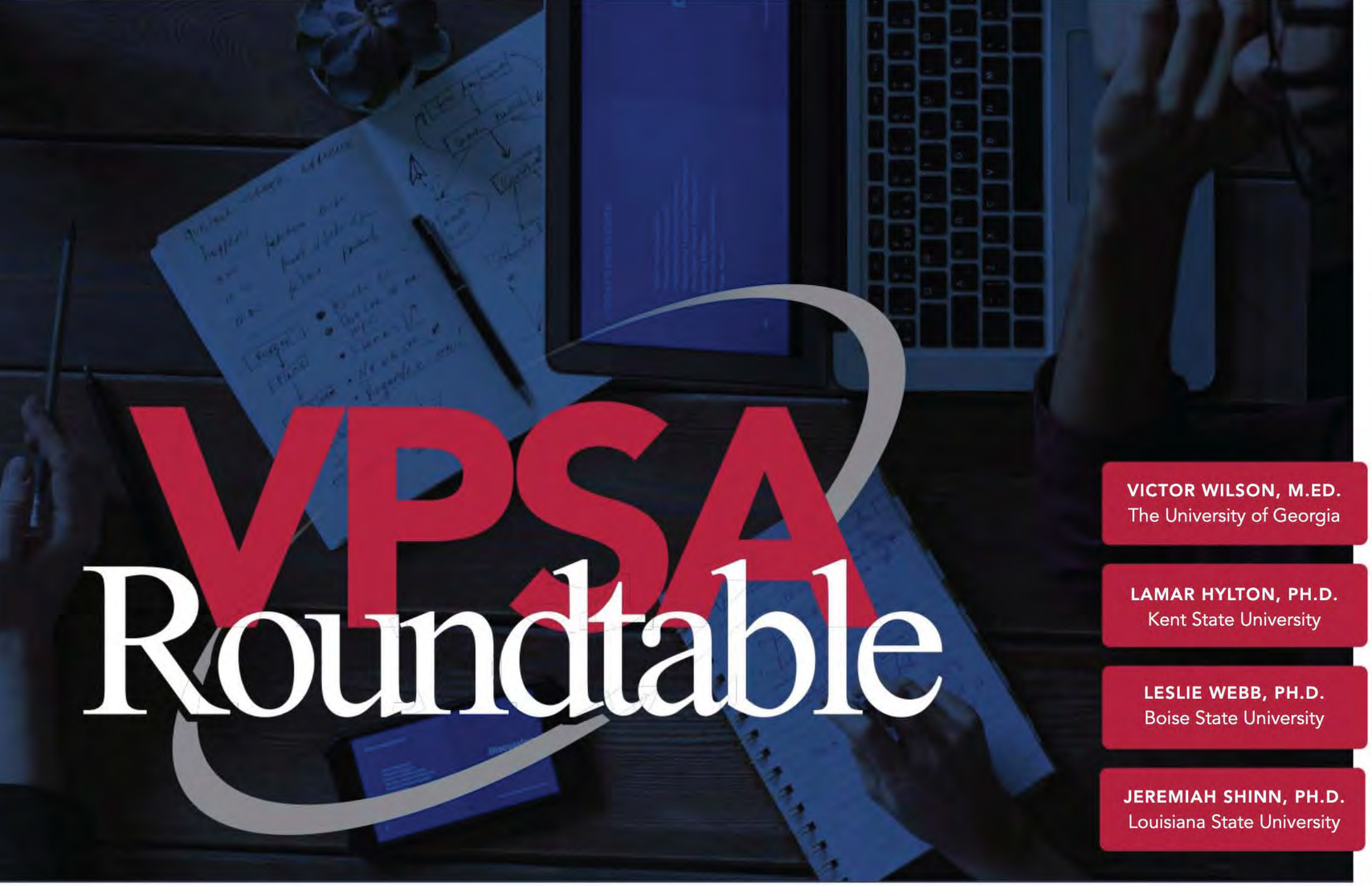
The original newsletter was formatted as a series of questions posed and responded to by members of the editorial board. A subscription to the newsletter included the opportunity to submit two questions for a group of campus-based professionals to respond to throughout the year. Each edition also included a special feature such as recruitment statistics at an individual campus. Some questions — in their original form — from early issues of the newsletter include:

1. *Are sex lines being broken down with regard to the roles of the "fraternity advisor" and "sorority advisor?"*
2. *Now that a number of our IFCs have eliminated or de-emphasized rush weeks, and operated with long summer pledging periods for a number of years, how do we counteract the general apathy among recent high school graduates toward making a decision about fraternity membership? In other words, many of our rush chairmen, last year and this year, report men are interested in fraternities but less certain about making a decision and drag that decision on, and on, and on — thus increasing the frustration of the membership chairmen and the cost of the rush program.*
3. *Has there been an increase in colonization interest by national fraternities, and what standards, or requirements must an organization meet in order to colonize on your campus?*
4. *Compare your fall rush statistics for 1972 and 1973. How many men were pledged in the fall of each year and what was the percentage of increase or decrease?*
5. *Does your school have a judicial body to handle student conflicts between Greek houses? How is that group constituted? Is there an appellate body if a person/group feels he/they were treated unfairly during the first judiciary process?*
6. *If you have a food co-op buying unit, have you found anyone to bid on case items, staples, bread, milk, or meat?*
7. *What are some of the major problems that should be anticipated in the initial establishment of a cooperative food buying program? How can these problems be avoided?*
8. *Outside of using the art of persuasion and assistance of national field representatives, what tools have you used, as a fraternity advisor, to challenge individual fraternities to achieve greater goals within their houses?*

There are a few takeaways from the early editions of what has grown to become the Perspectives of today. Most importantly, there was a large focus on traditionally and predominantly white IFC fraternities, which arguably still exists within the profession today. Few items mentioned sororities, but they were mostly framed as relevant only to National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) sororities and not the profession or community at large. This focus also still exists within the profession. While there are signs of progress when comparing today's reality to these questions of the past, it must be acknowledged that many of these sentiments still remain — simply in different language and framing. The field of fraternity and sorority advising still has a long way to go in terms of breaking down systems that serve as barriers to inclusive fraternity and sorority communities and the profession that aims to support it.

The Fraternity Newsletter was produced until fall 1977. At that point, volume five, edition one became the official publication of the newly formed Association of Fraternity Advisors. The newsletter was later changed to AFA Perspectives by the AFA Executive Board at the December 1990 meeting. The name change reflected the publication was no longer simply a newsletter.

We hope this historical touchpoint of the profession will spark conversations about the current state of the field. We also encourage anyone interested in contributing to the publication or this new Historical Viewpoints regular short feature to reach out. If you are curious about exploring the Perspectives archives, you can find the publication's digital copies on the AFA website. Upon logging in with an AFA username and password, they can be found under the Resources tab and "Perspectives Magazine." On that page you can find more information about how to submit potential articles and links for previous issues.



VPSA Roundtable

VICTOR WILSON, M.ED.
The University of Georgia

LAMAR HYLTON, PH.D.
Kent State University

LESLIE WEBB, PH.D.
Boise State University

JEREMIAH SHINN, PH.D.
Louisiana State University

The following interviews took place on Tuesday, May 19, 2020:

As COVID-19 continues to spread and its implications become more pronounced, questions are far more prevalent than answers. While virtual learning knocked on the door, what was seemingly an afterthought or impossible feat in many academic spaces for years quickly became a necessity within American higher education. As institutions, departments, and organizations try to navigate the tidal wave transition to remote learning, there are few scenarios that present desirable options. Information is unclear and incomplete at best. Competing interests on inter/national, state, and local levels create a lack of clear direction from government and regulatory agencies. Yet, the pressure for higher education institutions to take action mounted as case numbers grew and will persist for years as colleges and universities attempt to navigate the vast ripple effects of the virus.

All of this prompts the questions: How does one make decisions when it's impossible to have all the necessary information for doing so? How do leaders forge a path forward when there are seemingly no good options?

While we are far from standing on the other side of COVID-19, there is a present opportunity to take stock of the response to this point and identify lessons to inform action moving forward. Perspectives had the opportunity to sit down with a group of vice presidents for student affairs to talk about how they responded and continue to respond to this challenge. This discussion focuses less on the "what" and more on the "how" and "why" of decision making, as well as what we can all do — from our various seats — moving forward.

Q: How are you making decisions in a time of such uncertainty?

Wilson: The difficulty from my viewpoint is you are making decisions, and you are just kind of guessing. You don't have all of the information. For me, all of a sudden everyone around me is an epidemiologist. I think having to make decisions and be decisive is hard for us because we like having data and information, but some of that is not there. You have to make decisions now, and it is uncomfortable. Leadership is sometimes uncomfortable; and it is challenging and frustrating.

Hylton: What has been helpful in decision making is keeping a level of openness and transparency with staff members about how uncertain the times are as a reminder — being forthright and honest we are not going to have the answers to questions that might be percolating in your head. We can make decisions on the matters at hand, but we also need nimbleness and flexibility to pivot on those decisions as more information becomes available.

Webb: This is such a good question — such a tricky topic. First, I refer to a set of values that guide our division's work. Then, because I think you're interested in the now, as in COVID-19 response, I ensure prioritization of health and safety over all else. I invite other stakeholders to share perspectives. This can be challenging because some are not interested in making decisions, and some want to be involved but struggle with the big picture. For example, right now it's imperative we don't prioritize preserving individual positions and roles, at all costs, over the business of keeping the university open to continue to serve students in their academic pursuits. These must be done together, using prioritization, evidence-based outcomes, contribution to student learning, inclusion and equity, fiscal mindedness, etc. Ultimately, I look through the now and try to see the bigger picture, and the future, through a lens of sustainability.

Shinn: The only thing I would add is sometimes we get into decision making fatigue when we think every decision needs to be made right now. I am always saying what is the hurry on this? Is this a decision that must be made right now or could it be made just as easily on August 15? There are some things that must be done right now, so let's reserve our energy for those things. Then, we will get to the other things. Sometimes there is pressure to do everything, and we don't have to do everything. Decide what is important now and solve that. Then, tomorrow we will worry about tomorrow.

Wilson: I just want to add, and I will own this … I think something I need to learn, as an extrovert I am uncomfortable with silence and extremely uncomfortable with not making a decision. But, I think we all need to get comfortable with the fact that not making a decision can be making a decision

Q: How do you instill confidence in your team and staff as you make decisions?

Hylton: I think it goes back to being honest and real. It is about educating staff on things that can be decided on and those that cannot. I call it the three spheres. There are the things in our control, the things we can influence, and the things out of our control. Human nature would have us focus on that

third sphere quite a bit. If we shift to the things within our realm of control, we are better positioned to understand how decision making at the leadership level truly works. Also, decision making does not happen within a vacuum. There are likely other stakeholders, colleagues, and individuals who need to be engaged in decision making. I have found the things staff look to me to make a decision on often involve at least two other people or functions that I need to bring to the table. I think there is a transparency about how the true decision-making process works that is helpful in the conversation about showing up decisively.

> *"I have learned to trust I am prepared for the role even though the circumstances surrounding the role may lead me to feel as though I am not as prepared as I am."*

Shinn: I did a video message at the start of this where I said, "Hey I don't like this, I'm not good at it, and it is ok if you're not either." We are going to get through it, and we are going to put one foot in front of the other. It is ok to not be good at this, it is ok to not like it, it is ok to not know what is next. Hopefully, my owning that message instills confidence in others' ability to move forward if they felt similarly and wondered if they were the only ones.

Q: What have you learned about your decision making process?

Shinn: I find we are going back and forth, weaving from emergency to short term planning to long term planning, and they all happen in the same conversation. So, I am really trying to distill is this an emergency, short term, or long-term conversation? With how my brain works, I am learning to build new buckets, so I can deal with them that way because if I put everything in the same bucket, I cannot deal with it. I have to get everything in the right bucket, so I can go back and work through it. Our current situation presents aggregate stuff to sort through that is different than anything I have ever had to sort through. But, once a problem is in the right bucket I can solve it.

Wilson: The lesson for me is you are not going to make everyone happy. So, you take your best data. You talk to your colleagues like my friends here, you talk to your president, you take everything you can get and you make a decision. So when you get criticized, you can go back and say I feel good about my process.

Hylton: I am a new VP, and this is an interesting time to assume a vice presidency for student affairs. I have learned to trust I am prepared for the role even though the circumstances surrounding the role may lead me to feel as though I am not as prepared as I am.

Second, there is a network of VPs navigating the very same issues you are navigating. Don't feel like you have to make decisions of your own accord without reaching out to your network. I have found so much value in reaching out to various VP colleagues, not only in my own state but around the country, to bounce ideas off, get perspective, simply vent, and come to a clearer understanding of how I would like to move forward.

Wilson: I would just say to Lamar, I think what you are doing is great and there are many others like myself who will be there for you. I always tell all my graduate students you should have your kitchen cabinet. Those are the three to five people you can call who are going to put it out there — they will not sugar coat it for you. A lot of people have called me and when they are freaking out, the bottom line I said to them is we are made for this.

Webb: Along with that, I think it is important we look beyond our individual organizations to understand what is happening at other places. How can that inform the work we do at our institution? We need to understand the full range of realities we face in the nation, at other colleges and universities, in our professional associations, and our communities. This can be important for staff at all levels, from the vice president to entry level.

Shinn: This situation is all new and none of us were prepared for it, but at the same time, everything we have done prepared us for this. Going back to the fundamentals still works. It's still blocking and tackling. It is a new set of challenges, but the same stuff solves it.

Q: If I am a younger professional, what do I need to do right now … how can I contribute to the team?

Hylton: I think instead of shying away from the uncertainty of the moment, lean into it. Leverage and hone in on certain skills and competencies that can make you a well-rounded professional. Be open to new opportunities because at this moment new opportunities will present themselves. You should be positioned as a new, or even mid-level, professional to seize those moments as they come. I have found the people I rely on are the ones that aren't afraid of a challenge and are willing to embrace some ambiguity for the greater good of the organization.

Wilson: My mother used to have this saying when others would tell her "you aren't going to do that!" She would respond and say "hide and watch." I think that was her way of saying look what I am going to do here.

I think our younger professionals — particularly entry level — could learn so much if some of them, not all, would stop believing "I am educated through this great program, and I know everything, and I could be the VP tomorrow." If they would just sit down and "hide and watch" they could learn so much from those of us in senior leadership positions. Now, on the other hand, those of us in leadership, I think it is important to note these are the times people are really watching.

Shinn: I think this … more than any time in the last ten years … is the time to decide if you are going to be the one people can count on. There are going to be a lot of people we cannot count on during this time. So, when we have to depend on people, just decide to be the person your boss, your boss' boss, your boss' boss' boss — whoever that is — be the person they can depend on. Don't look for credit or kudos. Just be the person they can depend on. I believe over time if you are the person people can depend on, and looking back in retrospect, if you are the person during COVID that gets things done and we don't have to worry about, not only are you going to grow in your career, but you are going to gain capital.

Webb: To build on Jeremiah's thoughts, people need to attempt to understand the big picture versus solely focusing on their individual selves. This can be a challenge because we have all experienced disruption in our lives. However, we need to recognize that business as usual is not going to be the case for some time. It is time to do some self-analysis of skill sets and deficits and look for ways to pivot and contribute as we all reintegrate into new work functions that emerge within the new reality of our institutions. If people are willing to actively seek where help is needed, even if it is not their typical work area, it will help them to become the person we can count on to advance the interests of our institutions and ultimately serve the needs of our students.

Jeremiah Shinn, Ph.D.
Louisiana State University and A&M College (LSU)
Vice President for Student Affairs

Jeremiah Shinn serves as vice president for student affairs at Louisiana State University and A&M College (LSU). At large public research institutions (including LSU, Boise State University, Indiana University, and Eastern Michigan University) Dr. Shinn has led organizational change, partnership development, equity and inclusion efforts, student advocacy efforts, and various other strategic initiatives. He has taught graduate and undergraduate-level courses in Colleges of Education, Health Sciences, and Innovation & Design, as well as the Honors College. He served on the AFA Board of Directors from 2007 – 2014 and was the 2013 AFA President.

Victor K. Wilson, M.Ed.
University of Georgia
Vice President for Student Affairs

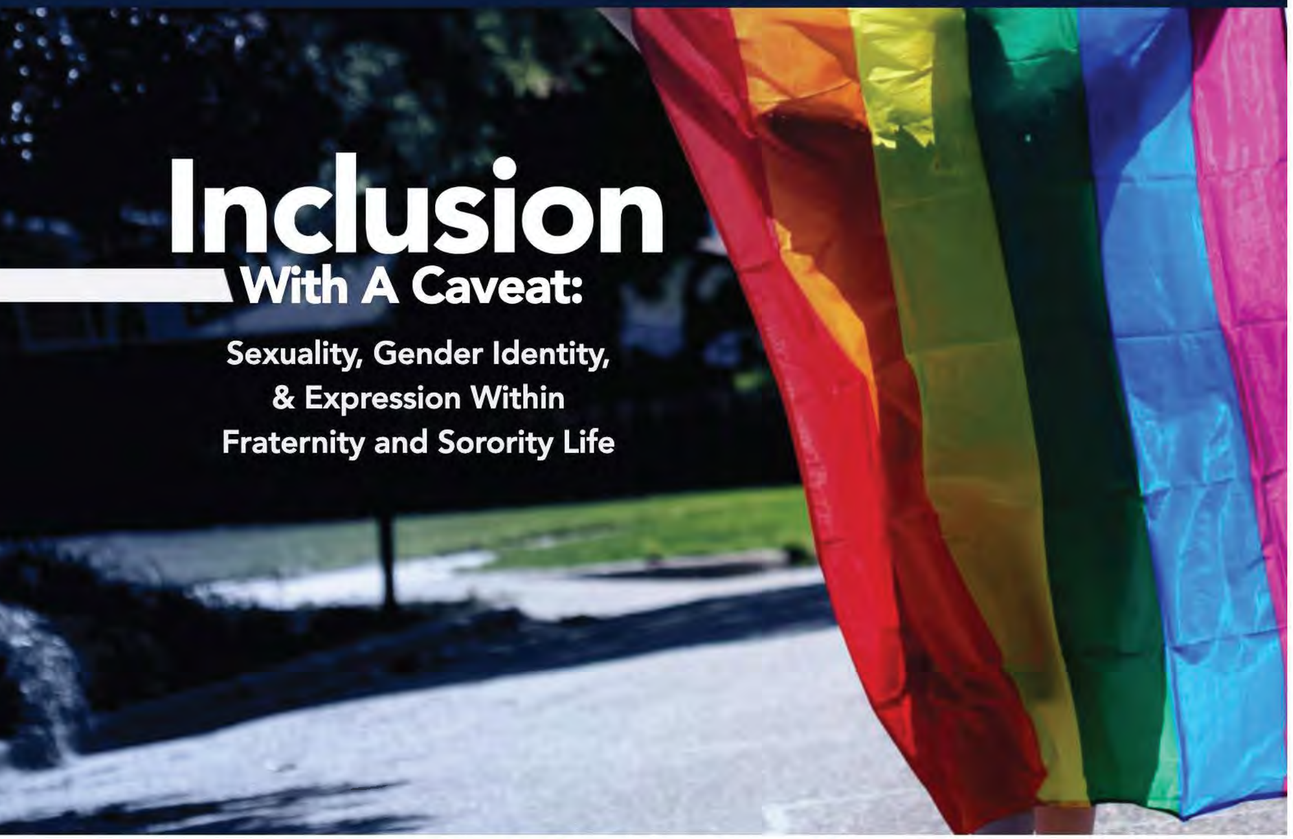
Victor K. Wilson is vice president for student affairs at the University of Georgia. A strong advocate for students and student development, particularly the inclusion and success of students from historically underrepresented groups, Mr. Wilson has more than three decades of experience in higher education administration and student affairs at the University of Georgia, College of Charleston, Agnes Scott College, and Northern Arizona University. Wilson has held leadership roles in several national organizations, including NODA and ACPA. He has served as a faculty member for the NODA Orientation Professionals Institute, as well as for the Southern Association for College Student Affairs/NASPA Region III New Professionals Institute. Wilson also serves on the National Board of Directors for Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity and the Board of Directors for the St. Mary's Health Care System.

Leslie Webb
Boise State University
Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management

Leslie Webb is vice president for student affairs and enrollment management at Boise State University. Working in student affairs for over 25 years, she is hyper-focused on student success initiatives, especially those decreasing the achievement gap. She has a bachelor's in theatre arts from Central Washington University (and yes, she uses that degree every single day), a master's in college student personnel from Western Illinois University, and a Ph.D. in educational leadership from Colorado State University.

Lamar Hylton
Kent State University
Vice President for Student Affairs

Lamar Hylton is vice president for student affairs at Kent State University after previously working as dean of students. Prior to joining Kent State, he served as the assistant vice provost for student affairs at the University of Minnesota. He also served as director of the Intercultural Center and Office of Multicultural Student Programs at the University of North Carolina – Asheville from 2011 to 2014. Hylton received a Bachelor of Arts in vocal music-performance from Morgan State University, Master of Education in college student personnel from Ohio University, and Ph.D. in higher education administration from Morgan State.



Inclusion
With A Caveat:
Sexuality, Gender Identity, & Expression Within Fraternity and Sorority Life

STEVEN SALVATORE GIANNINO

I am gay. It took 20 years to say those words openly. Before that, my sexuality was always in question. One of my earliest memories is my father calling me a "fairy" because I wanted to learn to tap dance like my big sister. I always knew I was different. I did not speak the same language as my father, uncles, male cousins, and friends. They talked about baseball and football, and I talked about Nancy Kerrigan and Tonya Harding. I received weird looks from relatives as my father made jokes to excuse my apparently egregious sin. It was not so apparent to me. I never knew what I had done wrong … figure skating is a sport, right?

Throughout elementary school and up to my first year of high school, classmates used words like "f***ot," "queer," "fairy," and "fruit" to describe me. These words became weapons, used like daggers to wound my self-esteem. They were also words used to reconcile in their minds why I was not a "normal" boy. How could a boy prefer to jump rope with the girls rather than wrestle in the dirt? I wondered the same. On those tough days, I did not have the luxury of going home to find comfort or commonality. No one in my family "looked" like me. They openly admitted they did not understand me. Rather than offering kindness or explaining why I may be different, my father told me to stop being a sissy and start playing with the boys. That became my internal narrative for the next several years.

Coming of age in the late 1990s and early 2000s, my understanding of the gay experience was limited to horror stories I saw on the news and characterizations of Jack McFarland from the show "Will and Grace." Those realities were not an option for me. I lived in fear that if someone learned the truth of my sexual identity my family would abandon me, or I would be tortured and left to die like Matthew Shepard. The only choice that seemed reasonable was to learn to live with my secret hidden deep in the closet.

> The closet is a lonely but often necessary place.

In her seminal book, "The Epistemology of the Closet," Eva Sedgwick describes the closet as "a private or concealed trouble in one's house or circumstances, ever present, and ever liable to come into view." It was that threat of liability that kept the authenticity of many sexual minorities of my generation, and those before, tucked deep in the darkness of the closet. The ideology of the closet is what makes the experience of sexual minorities unique from other marginalized groups. Our otherness is not apparent. It is not like skin tone/hue, hair texture, or another visible identifier of difference. Most times, we get to decide how people see us through performances of our "chosen" sexual/gendered identity. If we choose, we can keep up appearances and continue operating in the heteronormative center of society. If we choose, we can play the part needed to pass and keep our authentic selves protected safely in the closet. That too, comes at a cost.

By the time I entered college, my "straight guy" character was fully realized. All the lines were memorized and mannerisms spot-on. As someone who prides himself upon not being a liar, I rationalized my inauthenticity as harmless. No one asked if I was gay, and I simply did not offer that information. In preparation for interacting with heterosexual men on campus and at parties, I created four airtight topics of conversation: beer, boobs, biceps (the gym), and sports. While that may seem wildly reductive, I often observed men speaking on those topics. In my mind, as long as I did not veer from those points, I was golden. I trained myself to use pronouns like "them" and "their" when speaking about romantic partners. I had a plan for every possible scenario; it was exhausting.

> A fellow student I became friendly with mentioned he was going to a fraternity party and asked if I wanted to join.

I thought it may be fun to experience a world I never thought I would be included in. When we arrived at the Phi Kappa Sigma house, I was surprised. It was not the toga wearing, keg-smashing atmosphere I imagined. Rather, it was people hanging around, talking, listening to music, laughing and yes, consuming beverages. As I walked in, many members introduced themselves and welcomed me to their house. It was one of the first times a group of men seemed genuinely interested in getting to know me. As I left, two members invited me back the next night to meet some other members. I agreed. As I walked home, I immediately remembered the person they met was not really me. The person they wanted to get to know did not really exist.

The more I went to the Phi Kap house, the more I liked it. Every time I left, my guilt grew knowing the person they all thought they were becoming friends with was a myth. Eventually, three of the members asked if I would consider joining Phi Kappa Sigma. I immediately panicked. The weight of the closet became too much. How long could I keep up this performance? I was tired, and the guilt was immense. The mental gymnastics I performed to keep my stories right and pronouns correct was taking its toll. I said to them, "You don't want me. I am not the right type." All I could think about was getting out of the room with my secret still safe. Someone responded, "Why not?" I do not know if it was a burst of bravery, exhaustion, or desperation, but in that moment I was done. I made the choice to be done. I looked at them and said, "You don't want me because I am gay." That was the first time I ever said those words aloud. I looked at their faces to gauge a reaction … would it be anger, pity, disgust? After about 20 seconds of silence one of them said, "OK, is it a problem we aren't?" I said, "No, I just assumed you don't let in gay guys." They laughed. They explained they look for the values of the organization within each potential member. Will you be a good brother? That is what matters most. Eight weeks later, I attended my initiation as a member of Phi Kappa Sigma.

> My story is just one testimonial of the inherent value of Greek-lettered organizations, especially for those who identify outside of the prescribed norms.

While I know my experience is not universal, it does matter. Far too long we have heard stories and watched mediated accounts of the dark side of fraternity and sorority life. That too, is one experience; however it has been crystallized in society through popular culture as the only experience. Phi Kappa Sigma provided me a sense of belonging I did not find in my family or outside friend group. That group of people showed me that my sexuality was not

rooted in negative difference. They showed me through the values and mission of Phi Kappa Sigma, we share commonality. In fact, we were more alike than we were different. Slowly, I found the courage to begin tearing down the closet walls and living authentically. Phi Kappa Sigma gave me a safe space to explore and understand my sexual identity with dignity and pride. During that exploration, I realized my fear of the word "gay" and echoed calls by society of perversion, sickness, and damnation did not matter. I realized my otherness was not a shameful mistake by God, but rather a gift I received so I could experience the world differently.

When I went through Phi Kap's new member program, there were very few openly gay men in fraternities on campus. In fact, I was one of two openly gay men in a fraternity. While it was never my intent to provide education or epistemological shifts to my brothers and other fraternity/sorority members, I had countless conversations about my gayness. It felt overwhelming being the appointed representative of an entire community, tasked with the responsibility of explaining the gay experience, especially when I was still trying to figure it out for myself. I accepted it, though. Despite not wanting to be "the gay Phi Kap," I wore it with pride. I would like to think all of those late night talks on the front porch of the house made a difference … I know they did to me.

As my undergraduate experience ended, I still did not fully appreciate my place in moving the needle on gay rights. Unsurprisingly, every time I stood up to discrimination on campus, in a classroom, at work, or experienced intolerance or hate, my brothers stood with me. Even those with different values or ideals offered support. Looking back on that now, I do not know if I would have had the fortitude to keep speaking without their encouragement.

> **Throughout the mid-to-late 2000s the millennial generation began demanding a dialogue about acceptance and tolerance.**

There was a clear shift in the way society began to speak about the LGBT community. Media coverage began to focus on inequities in the United States legal system that disenfranchised sexual monitories. Slowly, change happened. In the 2003 case Lawrence v. Texas, the United States Supreme Court struck down sodomy laws in fourteen states, making consensual homosexual sex legal in all 50 states. Around this time, many states began recognizing sexual minorities as a protected class (16 still do not) and acknowledge our rights to live free of sanctioned discrimination. These legal changes crystallized the United States as experiencing a paradigm shift led by millennials. As the rallies and marches continued into the second decade of the 21st century, the LGBT community sought the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and the Defense of Marriage Act. All of this movement toward equality set the stage for the 2015 Supreme Court ruling in Obergefell v. Hodges that gave same-sex couples the right to marry, nationally.

I am proud of how much change millennials led for the LGBT movement. I am also proud of the part I played in that. I do not presume to think my voice or activism significantly impacted the gay rights movement. I did what I could, how I could. I often wonder if I did enough during my undergraduate years to help pave a way for those now coming of age. Did my bravery make a difference? Did my openness in a system that often refuses to acknowledge its role in furthering oppression create lasting change? I would like to think it did. I hope all of the times I was tokenized as Phi Kap's gay member or told "I never met a gay guy before you," changed a perspective or somehow made the world a little more tolerant — even if only at the micro level.

"Social politics work in a way that when those with power do not inherently understand something, they rage against it and try to regulate it."

> **Since my time as an undergraduate member, the complexities and nuances of sexual and gender identity have grown.**

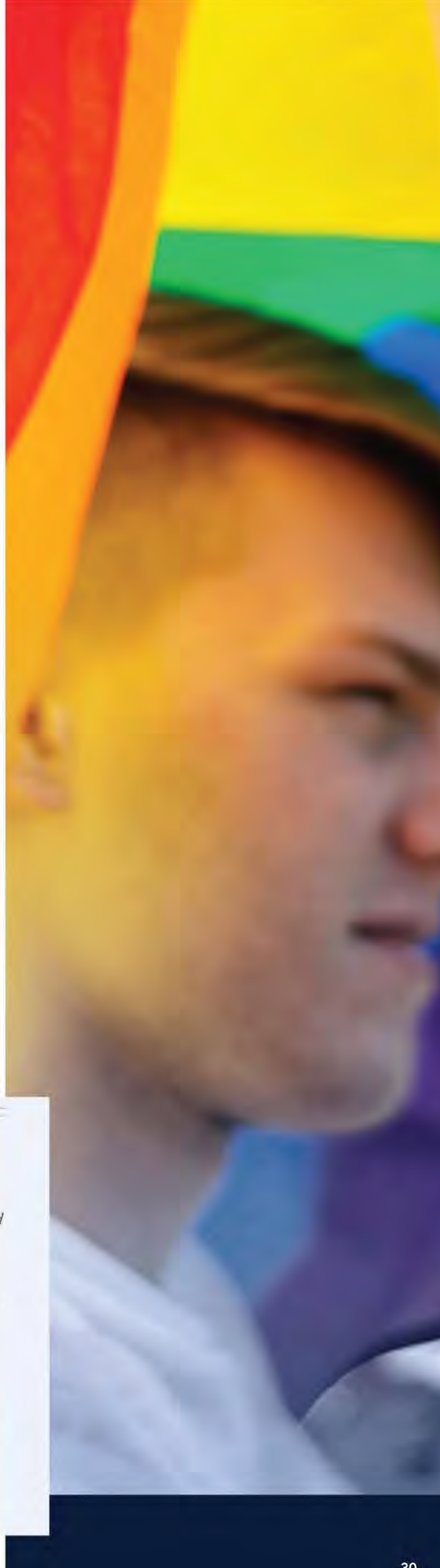
The identity spectrum continues to evolve worldwide, as do the misunderstandings, fears, and discriminatory acts. I think about the experiences of young trans and gender non-binary people in relation to my own. What is their campus experience like? What challenges do they face every day? While I don't know the nuances of those challenges, I empathize with the struggles of trying to build a community of true friends. I found a community in fraternity and sorority life. I found the right organization and the right chapter, at the right time. I was lucky.

Despite that individual experience, the fraternity and sorority system is flawed. It has a long history of policies that disenfranchise groups of varying identities. While many NPC and NIC groups espouse diversity, equity, and inclusion policies, one might wonder if those are just performative acts. How do these organizations outwardly create ties with LGBTQIA+ students for recruitment? Are there progressive events, meetings, or social experiences to build bridges between sexual/gender identity monitories and fraternity and sorority life? Do organizations believe there is value in sexual and gender identity diversity in their chapters, and if they do, why is there little-to-no outreach? I fear the answer to those questions is rooted in social politics rather than ignorance.

Social politics work in a way that when those with power do not inherently understand something, they rage against it and try to regulate it. Regulating identity of any kind creates discriminatory language, policies, and actions. Today, those who identify as transgender and gender non-binary are some of the targets of social policing that devalues their experiences. Knowingly and unknowingly, the fraternity and sorority system participates in that policing; and in relation to gender non-binary individuals, often ignores them entirely.

The topic of sexual and gender identity and expression in fraternity and sorority life is multifaceted and arouses deep emotions and opinions from all sides. Despite that, fraternity and sorority life must evolve. Universally, meaningful dialogue must begin that may lead to understanding across difference and perhaps even change. Engaging in discourses of negative difference that reduce things to hetero or homo, male or female, and man or woman must stop. We must try stepping outside of our boxes to open doors for new ways of knowing and doing. Just as the millennial generation marked another shift in the LGBT movement, Generation Z is also bringing a shift in identity politics that will continue to question and challenge the value of the fraternity and sorority experience as it is currently defined. If this industry chooses to engage with parts of that social shift while ignoring and even refuting others, what does that say about these organizations that claim to be rooted in values such as integrity, leadership, service, love for humankind, and justice?

Much progress has been made and there is still a long way to go. In my experience, a fraternity saved me in ways I cannot articulate. For that, I am profoundly grateful that during my time as an undergraduate there was no single-sexuality policy to prevent me from joining.



Steven Salvatore Giannino
Delta Phi Epsilon Sorority
Director of Communications and Development

Steven Salvatore Giannino is a mass communication scholar and professional that currently serves as the director of communications and development for Delta Phi Epsilon Sorority. He is a member of Phi Kappa Sigma Fraternity, the Fraternity/Sorority Communication Association, and the Philadelphia Public Relations Association. Inquiries or comments can be sent to Sgiannino@dphie.org.

MICHAEL A. GOODMAN, PH.D.

As a phenomenologist, I am led by questions. Furthermore, I am led by a desire to see the world in a way that allows necessary questions to appear. Here, the art of questioning takes its place. Within this questioning, I position my own research philosophy; one that has led me to participate in the AFA Research Committee. Over the past year and a half, the AFA Research Committee has asked questions and engaged in questioning as a way to better serve the association and its members from different backgrounds, positions, and needs. As a group, we regularly consider the following:

1. How should the association connect practitioners with research?
2. What areas of the industry require a deep review of past scholarship and practice?
3. How can research and scholarship become more accessible across varying functionalities and institution/organization types?

While many of these questions require complex and lengthy responses, through questioning we can better understand the path forward. Within the realm of questioning, a new opportunity emerges: exploring. But what does it mean to explore? A deep-sea diver will take an expedition to look into an unknown. As a result, unseen gems and treasures can be investigated, studied, and analyzed. Is this, then, the art of research and inquiry … to explore? In the spirit of exploration, new opportunities for questioning come to mind.

AFA Perspectives is excited to partner with the AFA Research Committee to create opportunities for such questioning in each issue of Perspectives moving forward. This recurring short feature will highlight work occurring within the AFA Research Committee, build upon research being conducted, and highlight the questions we must explore as a profession.

How might fraternity/sorority life intersect with other fields of study?

At times, higher education and fraternity/sorority life can be insular industries. What if research from other fields was valued as much as the work within this industry and our own sphere of influence? By intersecting with other fields of study, fraternity/sorority research might be seen differently than when we control through our own lens. For example, great fraternity/sorority research can be gleaned from New Directions for Student Services, Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice, and certainly Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors.

But what if we spent more time engaging with interdisciplinary approaches to examining our work? How might we look to other fields of study or practice that view our world as part of their research scope? Publications such as The American Journal on Addictions, Journal of Community Health, Family Relations, and Sociology Compass may not center fraternity/sorority students alone; however, they often control for such a population when writing about college students. There is a lot to learn from these studies and journals as fraternity/sorority experiences are compared or described alongside non-affiliated students. Here, research ideas or topics can be grown alongside other industries, disciplines, and approaches.

What mediums can be created for scholars and practitioners to engage with research?

When we discuss research within the fraternity/sorority industry, we must also consider the practitioners themselves who are often on the front lines of the work. Research should be accessible, useful, and not research for research's sake. As a field, our view of scholarship can move beyond academic journals to consider publications, like Essentials, Perspectives, and the hundreds of fraternity/sorority publications frequently disseminated within the field, as relevant and valuable.

For example, the recent work in the Delta Gamma Anchora is a necessary illustration of how research can take place by practitioners. As part of their research, Delta Gamma's director of marketing and communications, Anchora editor, and archivist went to Beloit, Wisconsin to examine documents and records associated with the organization's history. This type of research can inform internal work and broader external work within the field. Shortly after reading the Anchora article, I shared the publication with my campus archivist and set reminders to look at my own institution's history. The world of scholarship has a direct impact on the practice of fraternity/sorority life; and the intersection of an organization-institution partnership is especially illuminated as valuable.

RESEARCH SHOULD BE ACCESSIBLE, USEFUL, AND NOT RESEARCH FOR RESEARCH'S SAKE

How can graduate students engage differently with research and scholarship?

Graduate education differs depending upon the way each student enters the space. For some, a graduate degree is a means for professional access. For others, a graduate degree is a necessary achievement to unlock additional academic spaces (through research, the professoriate, and beyond). Faculty can assist in creating opportunities for student research and scholarship. While some seminal texts associated with this field are necessary for institutional framing, additional literature exists to uplift the current view of our organizations and industry. Course papers, theses, and projects can be turned into major contributions to the field through publications, conference presentations, or regional/campus learning opportunities. For many, finishing a class or major project can feel like the end. However, this work should be valued, and the labor involved can be an important contribution. Faculty can invite and allow graduate students to engage with research as a way of learning the process and value, and perhaps even publish with graduate students as part of their scholarly practice.

How can organizations and institutions partner to provide access to scholarship?

There is privilege associated with access to research and scholarship. For many journals and publications, there is an associated cost to having access. For headquarters staff or individuals working for inter/national organizations, one possibility to mitigate limited access can be partnering with a nearby college or university to gain access to a campus library or set of collections. Access to journals and other academic or historical texts may increase in ways that would otherwise be expensive or nonexistent. Perhaps institutions can create an "affiliate" status with fraternities and sororities. Perhaps partnerships can emerge between institutions and fraternities and sororities that can uplift additional stories about our nuanced histories, current practices, and relevant experiences.

While these are a few ways research and practice can intersect in our work, the AFA Research Committee has additional aims to prioritize research within this functional area. In the coming year, we intend to maximize support for research webinars, investigate and author "white papers" associated with topical areas of interest to the field, produce a quarterly research overview to highlight current scholarship and/or publications, and conduct additional work to help position AFA to lead in the realm of research and scholarship. Our members are deserving of this work, access, and attention to inquiry.

As questions require answers, questioning in this way is merely a path forward. In a 2014 article published in Phenomenology of Practice, Van Manen cites the methodology associated with phenomenology is not about answering questions or discovering determinate conclusions; instead, it is a philosophical method for questioning. This is where the illumination of possibilities exists. These possibilities can be great — in the work ahead, in the world of fraternities and sororities as we know them, and as they are yet to be known.

Michael A. Goodman, Ph.D.
University of Maryland, College Park
Assistant Director of Advising and Programming in the Department of Fraternity and Sorority Life

Michael A. Goodman (he/him/his) is the assistant director of advising and programming in the Department of Fraternity and Sorority Life at the University of Maryland, College Park. Michael is part of the AFA Research Committee and is a member of Pi Kappa Alpha.

EXCERPT FROM

Embrace & Reform:

Ending Hazing's Prohibition Era

ALDO CIMINO

Many fraternity and sorority members want to haze incoming members. My work in the Journal of Cognition and Culture discusses how members create ordeals that lack obvious relevance to organizational activities such as rigorous calisthenics or servile labor. The desire to haze among some members is sufficient to risk expulsion, civil or criminal consequences, chapter dissolution, and (in some instances) the death of an inductee. The persistence of hazing in the face of obvious risks and societal resistance should be interpreted as a clear message that many chapters desperately want to maintain severe inductions. Rather than working with chapters to codify safer hazing ordeals, a broad coalition has worked for decades to undercut the legitimacy of severe inductions and deny members the ability to conduct them. The result is we are now in hazing's prohibition era. Just like America's historical prohibition of alcohol, we have not stopped the production of hazing. Instead, we have ensured it can be produced in a way that is wholly unregulated and reckless.

In this article, I hope to convince you that the assumptions underlying modern hazing prevention efforts are flawed, and it is time to investigate alternatives. I will lay out one such alternative, with a focus on reforming hazing practices and ensuring informed consent.

"If you are an active member of a fraternity or sorority, understand this article will not serve as a justification for hazing, nor will it indemnify you from any consequences."

While some of my arguments may be logically applicable to organizations other than Greek letter societies, my recommendations are for fraternities and sororities only. Further, because research on hazing widely shows it is more severe among men, my focus will be on reforming fraternity hazing. Most importantly, I will advocate for the formal evaluation of specific hazing practices, not for their as-is acceptance. If you are an active member of a fraternity or sorority, understand this article will not serve as a justification for hazing, nor will it indemnify you from any consequences.

HAZING AND HUMANITY

As an anthropologist, all of my work focuses on understanding hazing. This includes experimental studies of hazing motivation and newcomer-directed attitudes (including pieces published in the Journal of Cognition and Culture, Evolution and Human Behavior, Human Nature, and Evolutionary Psychology), observational fieldwork with real-world fraternity hazing (published in the Journal of American Studies), efforts to refine policy and public understanding (including my work in the Journal of Higher Education Management), and countless hours reading accounts of hazing from around the world. One takeaway from this portfolio of work is fraternity hazing has much in common with the ethnographic record of such rites. Indeed, in one of my classes, I show students a slide that describes parts of a male initiation. It reads approximately as follows:

A Severe Male Initiation

- Dressed up as unattractive women with penises drawn on their stomachs.
- Deprived of food and water for days.
- Made to do a seventeen-mile hike.
- Made to sing naked.

When I ask students to guess what group performed these practices, they typically say they came from a college fraternity. But research conducted on Tusayan initiation ceremonies tells us these practices were all taken from a traditional Hopi initiation ceremony observed in 1891. The Hopi are far from unique in this regard. In the ethnographic record, hazing can be found in a diverse array of small-scale societies, documented on different continents, and in differing socio-ecological environments, many of them pre-industrial. The hazing practices of modern Greek letter societies are little more than a recent instance of a phenomenon that far predates us and will yet outlive us. This prompts many questions: Why did so many cultures independently invent hazing practices? Why does hazing have so many similar characteristics across cultures? Why do people keep reinventing and reestablishing hazing, even where it is actively prohibited and shamed? These questions are still being probed from a scientific perspective. Experimental, hypothesis-driven approaches to understanding hazing are uncommon as I and other scholars have suggested over the past decade.

My own work suggests hazing motivation may be — in part — a component of human nature: an anti-free rider strategy originally designed to prevent exploitation around group entry. That is, there is something about hazing that may have historically discouraged uncommitted prospects from staying, as well as temporarily changed the behavior of newcomers in a way that advantaged veteran members (e.g., by making newcomers work harder and adhere to group norms). This theory may help explain the prevalence, time depth, and commonalities of hazing across cultures. Because the scientific study of hazing is in its early stages, this initial theory is not settled and there is much to be learned, as suggested in a 2019 article on newcomer induction motivational mechanisms published by McCreary and Schutts in the Journal of Cognition and Culture. Regardless, I believe theories like my own are important for future hazing policy because they focus on the testable specifics of human coalitional psychology rather than the moralization of hazers.

Alongside the nascent scientific study of hazing are anti-hazing advocates that have collectively worked for decades to eradicate hazing, with a focus on Greek letter societies and athletic teams. These advocates have been justifiably motivated by the egregious abuses, injuries, and deaths that have occurred due to hazing. However, the efforts of advocates and scientists do not always comfortably intermix. Science, as a process, can raise questions that darken the clarity that drives an advocacy movement. My years of research into hazing have convinced me that, for Greek letter societies, the anti-hazing movement is pointed in the wrong direction.

THE DOMINANT PARADIGM: MORALIZE & SUPPRESS

To understand the problems with anti-hazing advocacy, one must understand its key assumptions. These assumptions form a kind of paradigm that has motivated or structured nearly all advocacy to date. I call this paradigm "Moralize & Suppress."

The Moralize & Suppress paradigm has inspired prevention strategies that emphasize the immorality of hazing and persuasive or punitive means to eradicate it. Examples of this paradigm can be found on hazing prevention websites and in decades worth of student affairs scholarly and practitioner work.

Its key assumptions are:

- **Hazing is immoral and dangerous:** There is no possible manifestation of hazing that could render it simultaneously moral and safe for its participants, regardless of the circumstances.
- **Hazing prohibition is possible and probable:** There are moralization tactics that will successfully convince relevant populations that hazing is immoral and dangerous. If these tactics are paired with commensurate punitive measures from legal and extralegal authorities, hazing will be eradicated or substantially reduced in a lasting manner.

My reading of the scholarly and non-scholarly literature on hazing suggests the Moralize & Suppress paradigm has no popular challenger, though varying degrees of skepticism and rejection have been expressed. The implicit or explicit call to moralize and suppress hazing dominates non-fiction media on the phenomenon, including most hazing-related research articles. However, the total set of hazing prevention efforts to date appears largely ineffectual: Hazing remains highly prevalent among Greek letter societies and other organizations, and yearly hazing deaths and abuses continue to mount, as documented in the International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health and running list of hazing deaths provided by author, speaker, and prominent anti-hazing advocate Hank Nuwer.

Nuwer summarized his frustration in a 2017 article for StopHazing.org:

> *"I've met dozens of the hazed and hazers alike, the families of the dead, the dedicated Greek professionals, a lot of jaded alums, and activists from HazingPrevention.org, Stophazing.org, the AHA Movement, and so on. Many parents who gave years of service to the cause have quit, so disillusioned by the continuing string of deaths that they no longer can even utter the word "hazing." Everything possible has been tried. Bystander training. Help Weeks instead of Hell Weeks. Associate memberships instead of pledges. Delayed rush. Yanking charters. But still the deaths continue."*

Individuals working under the Moralize & Suppress paradigm have had decades to create lasting and generalizable results. They have garnered the support of university administrators, law makers, and every major Greek letter organization. They have formed anti-hazing organizations, toured as anti-hazing speakers, and acted as anti-hazing consultants. Entire books and documentaries have been devoted to the effort to moralize and suppress hazing, not to mention all manner of news articles and radio segments. Even if this work has had a non-zero effect on the prevalence or harm of hazing, it has clearly failed at representing the kind of change that would satisfy most stakeholders. Why has all this effort resulted in so little ostensible success? One possible contributor is the underlying assumptions of the paradigm are flawed and are long overdue for public questioning.

PROBLEMS WITH THE PROHIBITION ASSUMPTION

If motivations to haze are partially a component of human nature and primarily activated by common environmental cues over which we have little control, our ability to prohibit hazing may be similarly constrained. My own studies suggest certain group properties such as cooperative intensity, commonly held benefits, and longevity may play a role in hazing motivation. Note these variables are not easy to manipulate in the real world. We cannot reach into groups and deprive them of intangible benefits like prestige. We cannot forbid group members from cooperating amongst themselves. Nor can we reasonably expect to prevent groups from enduring over time. If these and other common, hard-to-change environmental cues are among the fundamental drivers of hazing motivation, we should find hazing in many diverse cultures of the past and present. As noted in the introduction, this is precisely what we find. We should also find it is relatively easy to engender pro-hazing sentiments in experimental environments. This prediction is supported by vignette studies, wherein participants imagine themselves as members of groups with differing characteristics and then construct induction processes. Finally, we should find hazing is very difficult to prohibit and constantly being reinvented by a wide variety of groups.

To be clear, I am not suggesting hazing is difficult to suppress because the expression of human nature is uniform and obligate. On the contrary, human nature is designed by evolution to flexibly respond to countless environmental cues. Instead, I am

suggesting many of the environmental cues able to substantially and efficiently reduce hazing motivation (and thus hazing behavior) may be out of our reach. Note that "substantially" and "efficiently" are the operative terms. Given enough investment in constant monitoring, extreme punishment and propaganda, almost any behavior can be reduced in frequency. My concern is that, for fraternities in particular, hazing may require a very high level of monitoring and punishment to generate a substantial reduction. Even if such measures were implemented, their ultimate monetary and cultural costs could be profound. Imagine the impact, for example, of cameras in every room of a fraternity house, an in-house monitoring staff to follow and record initiation activities if they go off-site, lengthy jail time for even the most minor of hazing infractions, relentless exposure to anti-hazing propaganda, etc. At a certain point, in addition to causing significant dissatisfaction among members, such measures would risk turning Greek letter societies into interest groups whose primary mission is simply not hazing. Thankfully, this draconian vision does not have popular support. But absent such a dystopia, we are left with the extant set of ineffectual hazing prevention efforts.

PROBLEMS WITH THE MORALITY AND DANGER ASSUMPTION

Assume for a moment I am correct regarding the difficulty of suppressing hazing in Greek letter societies. It does not logically follow we should allow any hazing practices. By analogy, any number of behaviors may be difficult to suppress at the societal level that should still be shamed and punished (e.g., murder, sexual assault). Severe inductions, however, are varied phenomena that can be performed in ways that meet most people's intuitive ethical standards. The simplest demonstration of this is the uncontroversial existence of military basic training in the United States. Military basic training shares many characteristics in common with fraternity hazing ordeals: rigorous calisthenics, line-ups, yelling, menial labor, an emphasis on obedience, etc. Despite these facts, there is no moral panic over military "boot camp." No anti-hazing organization dedicates itself to making military basic training more "positive" or argues it causes "hidden harm" to the thousands who participate annually. Thus, the anti-hazing movement seems to implicitly take the stance that 18-year-olds can be safely subjected to harsh military inductions, but face unacceptable, dangerous bullying in doing calisthenics and housework for a fraternity. This appears contradictory, to say the least.

Perhaps the only persuasive objection to the military/fraternity comparison is a combined appeal to differing purposes and comparative safety: The military has a practical reason to perform severe inductions and such inductions are conducted by trained individuals. Note, however, this argument concedes any intrinsic concerns over the immorality and danger of some hazing ordeals. That is, it suggests practices such as shaving the heads of inductees or punishing them with calisthenics are not intrinsically harmful or immoral. Thus, by the same logic, if fraternity and sorority hazing had a convincing purpose and relative safety, it would also be acceptable. This is the opening to a possible future and alternative paradigm.

Continue reading this article at www.aldocimino.com

Aldo Cimino
UC Santa Barbara
Lecturer

Aldo Cimino is a lecturer at UC Santa Barbara and affiliate of the Center for Evolutionary Psychology. His work focuses on hazing, group newcomers, and enduring coalitions.

ADDRESSING HAZING MOTIVATIONS

KIMBERLY DAVIS

Nearly 75 percent of respondents to a 2018 study on the motivations for and impact of hazing published in Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors indicated they were skeptical that hazing impacts the quality of members joining and their commitment to the organization. That data suggests today's college student doubts the benefits of hazing within student organizations. Previous scholarly research, however, demonstrates how hazing victims perceive their experiences and rationalize persistence in organizations that mistreat them. That rationalization exists parallel to student skepticism about the impact of hazing. For student affairs practitioners and college administrators to eliminate hazing, they need to acknowledge those competing mindsets and move beyond identifying ways organizations mistreat newcomers. Educators must strive to understand the reasons why victims remain in organizations that haze rather than applying their potentially skeptical viewpoints regarding the perceived benefits of hazing within organizational processes.

A start to answering that question might exist in how students understand what constitutes hazing. A review of scholarly research suggests students often misunderstand what hazing entails and maintain a belief activities are not hazing if they are voluntary and/or nobody is injured. Further, students justify continued participation and membership in organizations that haze because they underestimate the dangers of hazing, overestimate the benefits they will receive as full members, and normalize their experiences as newcomers. Hazing victims might experience psychological barriers that prevent them from recognizing they are hazing victims. Therefore, administrators and practitioners must be sensitive to the experiences of students as they seek to understand what victims have endured. Several studies identify themes educators must consider as they work with students to combat hazing.

"Participating Was My Choice"

Students seldomly recognize activities or behaviors as hazing if they are voluntary. In a 2018 study published by Allan, Kerschner & Payne in the Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice, more than 75 percent of survey respondents indicated they did not report hazing because they chose to participate in the event.

"Nobody Was Hurt"

Students might develop positive feelings about a hazing experience if they participate in the activity without perceiving significant physical harm. Generally, students are quick to identify activities with physical force — e. g., paddling, beating, or restraining newcomers — as hazing. More than half (50.8 percent) of participants in that same study stated they did not report hazing because nobody was hurt or they perceived the hazing as "no big deal."

Complying with innocuous or lower risk hazing behaviors, however, may lead to increased willingness to engage in more dangerous forms of hazing due to students becoming more comfortable with the pattern of hazing behavior. Further, hazing events are likely to increase in severity as a newcomer's induction process progresses. When victims reduce mistreatment to the simple question of "But did they die?" they undermine the severity of hazing, including potential future consequences of hazing experiences.

"My Friends are in This Organization"

Making new friends can ease the transition to college/university life, but hazing victims may use friendships to lessen the dissonance they feel as a result of hazing. In a 2017 study by Véliz-Calderón & Allan published in Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors, participants shared their fraternity experiences, including hazing activities, were worthwhile because of the friendships they developed in the organization. Another possibility is students may opt to remain in an organization that hazes because they do not have social connections outside of the group. Participants in a 2005 study by Campo, Poulos & Sipple published in the American Journal of Health Behavior indicated having friends outside of the organization hazing them would be the most crucial factor in exiting that group or situation. So, while students want to reduce harm within the organization, they may be less inclined to state opposition to the behavior if they perceive their peers endorsing hazing behaviors.

> *When victims reduce mistreatment to the simple question of "But did they die?" they undermine the severity of hazing, including potential future consequences of hazing experiences.*

"Hazing Helps Group Members Bond"

In many cases, students believe hazing helps groups bond over a common challenge. When reflecting upon hazing experiences, victims shared they felt they were part of the group, accomplished, and stronger due to hazing. A 1983 study of fraternity men published in the Journal of College Student Personnel found the top reason collegiate and alumni fraternity members use to justify hazing is it builds unity within a new member class.

Similar to how victims rationalize enduring hazing because of friendships within the group, hazing victims may reduce dissonance by believing the bonds forged through hazing are worthwhile. Newcomers ultimately hope to obtain full membership in their respective organizations, including opportunities to build relationships with veteran members. If hazing activities allow new members to bond with each other as well as connect them to veteran members, victims may believe tolerating mistreatment is worth the perceived benefits.

"Hazing is a Rite of Passage"

Organizations often seek consistency in induction processes, and veteran members tend to believe new members should receive the same or similar treatment to what they experienced as newcomers. According to a 2018 study published in Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors about attitudes toward initiation and hazing, fraternity men were particularly likely to believe it is normal for new member processes to be difficult. Knowing the veteran members experienced the same treatment as newcomers and persisted to become full members may offer hazing victims a sense of comfort and hope they too can be inducted into the organization. Hazing victims also discuss hazing behaviors as a rite of passage into the group and cite hazing as a way they built loyalty to the group.

"Belonging to the Group is Worth the Suffering"

Students place so much importance on joining an organization that they willingly participate in a series of tests to prove they belong. Other students believe hazing should be part of an initiation process, as they feel participation in hazing activities makes members more legitimate once they are full members. In many cases, students who participate in hazing determine the benefits they receive from full membership in the group make up for the costs of hazing. Thus, hazing victims may decide to persist because they believe belonging to an important or esteemed group is worth the suffering hazing creates. Newcomers may reduce dissonance when they are hazed by clinging to a belief hazing is temporary and will lead to increased status after it is endured.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTITIONERS

Within groups, students may rationalize their experiences in many ways. Since different organizations vary in purpose and value, the alternatives to hazing practices that are appealing to each group will also vary. The reasons why members persist may also differ between and within organizations. Whereas one organization might be desirable because of its power and influence, other groups may be attractive because of the friendships and opportunities they generate. To effectively work with hazing victims, and organizations that haze, professionals must know and capitalize on emerging research that shows the majority of students doubt the positive impact of hazing while also keeping in mind the juxtaposed evidence for how members rationalize persistence through hazing experiences. Only then will they be positioned to help organizations find alternative programs or activities to generate benefits for members without mistreating newcomers.

Hazing is a difficult cycle to break for many reasons. Effectively challenging and eliminating hazing in student organizations requires more effort from institutions than merely prohibiting activities that meet an institutional or legal definition of hazing. Colleges and universities must ask "Why?" and strive to understand what enables hazing culture to reach its current proportions. In many cases, students fail to recognize their treatment constitutes hazing, so colleges and universities must take care in how they frame inquiries about students' experiences. Without input from students, institutions are unlikely to make progress in solving this problem entrenched in the culture of many organizations and across many campuses. Encouraging students to share their experiences as members will allow institutions to understand why hazing victims remain in their organizations.

Kimberly Davis
Louisiana State University
Graduate Assistant for Title IX

Kimberly Davis is a doctoral student in the higher education administration program at Louisiana State University, where she also serves as the graduate assistant for Title IX. She joined Alpha Gamma Delta as an undergraduate at Mercer University. She also holds a Master of Science in college student personnel from Arkansas Tech University.

COMPETENCY

SPOTLIGHT

This is the first installment of a Perspectives regular short feature that aims to dive more deeply into the AFA Core Competencies. Each issue, this section will be developed in collaboration with the AFA Professional Development Committee to further assist association members in applying the Core Competencies within their professional development. Each installment will focus on one competency and provide specific and tangible examples of how to apply the competency to enhance one's development.

PHILOSOPHY

When developing the Core Competencies in 2017, the workgroup had lengthy discussions about the question, "Who are these competencies for?" In the end, it was clear the Core Competencies were for all AFA members regardless of employer or membership type. Each competency was developed and evaluated from the perspectives of those employed to do fraternity/sorority work by inter/national headquarters, colleges/universities, vendors, graduate students, and those who serve as volunteers at any level. The Competencies are relevant to all positions and membership types, although they may be applied differently based on context.

IMPLEMENTING COMPETENCIES IN DIFFERENT ROLES

To illustrate relevance and difference across roles, here's one example of what the competency, "Assessing and Reporting Outcomes" looks like from four different positions in the fraternity/sorority profession.

COMPETENCY:

Assessing & Reporting Outcomes

Description:

Including defining learning and impact outcomes for every activity, developing data collection instruments (e.g., surveys, polls, journals, monitoring online and office traffic, time tracking, etc.), gathering data, analyzing and interpreting data, compiling assessment reports, incorporating results into communication systems, and using data to improve work.

Application:

HQ

- Using Google Analytics to reorganize and update the member-only side of a website
- Tracking completion rates of assessment/follow-up after a leadership program and sharing the information learned to the entire membership — not just internal leadership
- Utilizing self-assessments for collegiate leaders to determine progress toward job responsibilities

CAMPUS

- Tracking office traffic and frequently asked questions to improve communications and services
- Evaluating patterns and implications from chapter and community score cards
- Preparing content for an annual divisional assessment report
- Determining institutional priorities for annual budget proposals

VOLUNTEER

- Using chapter evaluation reports from the campus and/or headquarters to advise chapter leaders
- Reviewing campus climate assessment reports on student health, alcohol, sexual misconduct to understand student concerns
- Utilizing a 360-degree type assessment to assess advisor performance

VENDOR

- Reviewing program evaluation results to identify and address low-quality experiences
- Evaluating behavior trends across users/clients and adapting services to the industry
- Reporting use rates and impact measures to clients to support their assessment plans

LESSONS FROM SELF-ASSESSMENT DATA

Results of the 2019 Core Competencies Self-Assessment show that although there are differences across roles(+), we share similar opportunities for growth across the Core Competencies.

	HQ	CMP	VOL
Student Safety Research	★★	★★★	★★
Housing	★★★	★★	★★★
Local Laws	★★		★★
Designing Learning			★★
Closing & Reorganization		★★	
Managing Liability	★		
Expansion		★★	
Managing Finance		★★	
Learning Theories			★★
Assessment			★★
Federal Laws	★★		

Based on greatest percentage of respondents of each employer type themselves at level 1 or level 2 in each competency

★ Number of stars equals relative amount of importance (i.e. 5 stars = top priority)

*Not enough data from Vendors

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACROSS ROLES

While the AFA Core Competencies is a comprehensive resource to become a better professional, there are several ways to make the competencies work for you in addition to using the online self-assessment. Here are some ideas to consider:

HQ	CMP	VND	
○	○		Volunteer Leaders and Advisors: Volunteer leaders and advisors do similar work to professional staff. Consider using the Core Competencies as a framework to develop onboarding resources and provide ongoing training.
○			Leadership Consultants: Use the Competencies to develop training and support plans for consultants in preparation for the road. Having this level of training can increase the level of support your organization provides.
○	○		Graduate Assistants, Practicum Students, and Interns: Use the Competencies to develop job responsibilities, hiring processes, and professional development opportunities. Incorporate the competencies into their professional development plan to create well-prepared fraternity/sorority professionals.
		○	Vendors: Evaluate your services and staff. Are your company's services aligned with the Core Competencies? Do they have the expertise needed to adequately serve this industry? If not, consider realigning services and developing staff.
○	○	○	Reword the Competencies. They may feel broad and academic, so put them into your own words. Determine what that competency may look like for your role or the role you hope to have in the future.
○	○	○	Create case studies. One of the best ways to learn is through experiential learning. Consider creating case studies for staff members to complete — or even compete — with one another to learn how to apply the different core competencies.

COMPETENCIES IN ACTION

For those who transitioned from one type of employer to another, it's clear the Core Competencies apply to fraternity/sorority work across multiple employer types. Read the words of three individuals who recently made this transition.

Katie Gardner
Coordinator of Fraternity and Sorority Life
University of Colorado-Boulder

National Fraternity HQ to Campus

Q: How have you used the AFA Core Competencies across your different roles?

A: I have found the Core Competencies relevant at both a headquarters and an institution to help me identify areas I can improve in. Additionally, they helped me "sell myself" when making the transition because I was able to market my transferable skills by utilizing common language from the Core Competencies.

Brittany Barnes Deeg
Director of Curriculum and Training
Rise Partnerships

Campus to Vendor

Q: How have you used the AFA Core Competencies across your different roles?

A: Between my roles the similarities lie in supervision, thinking strategically, and navigating complexity. However, with the transition away from campus, some competencies that were urgent no longer inform my day to day, but rather my long-term needs.

Caitlyn Westfall
Assistant Director of Education and Leadership
Sigma Sigma Sigma National Headquarters

Campus to National Sorority HQ

Q: How have you used the AFA Core Competencies across your different roles?

A: When I served as a campus-based professional, I felt I was always pushing for the competencies; however, I was always putting out fires, so my proactive work went to the back burner. Now that I work for a headquarters, and put out less fires, I have the opportunity to be more intentional with the competencies in my work.

NEXT STEPS FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

Still wondering how the Competencies work for others? Try these two take-home assignments to gain a better understanding of the association's professional development framework.

Review the "AFA's Core Competencies Summary" on pages 7 and 8 of the AFA Core Competency Manual, but read it through the eyes of someone from a different employer (i.e. headquarters, campus, vendor or volunteer).

Write an outline that communicates what you do using the Core Competencies. Then, repeat the same process for your colleagues to explain what they do using the Core Competencies.

WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

This is the first part of a deep dive into the Core Competencies. We want to hear your suggestions about what element of the Core Competencies you would like to learn more about in future issues.

Email Dan Wrona, chair of the Professional Development Committee (dan@risepartnerships.com), or *Perspectives* co-editors Noah Borton (borton@deltau.org) and Brooke Goodman (brookegoodman01@gmail.com) with suggestions.

YOU ARE FLAMMABLE

CREATING A BURN RESISTANT CAREER

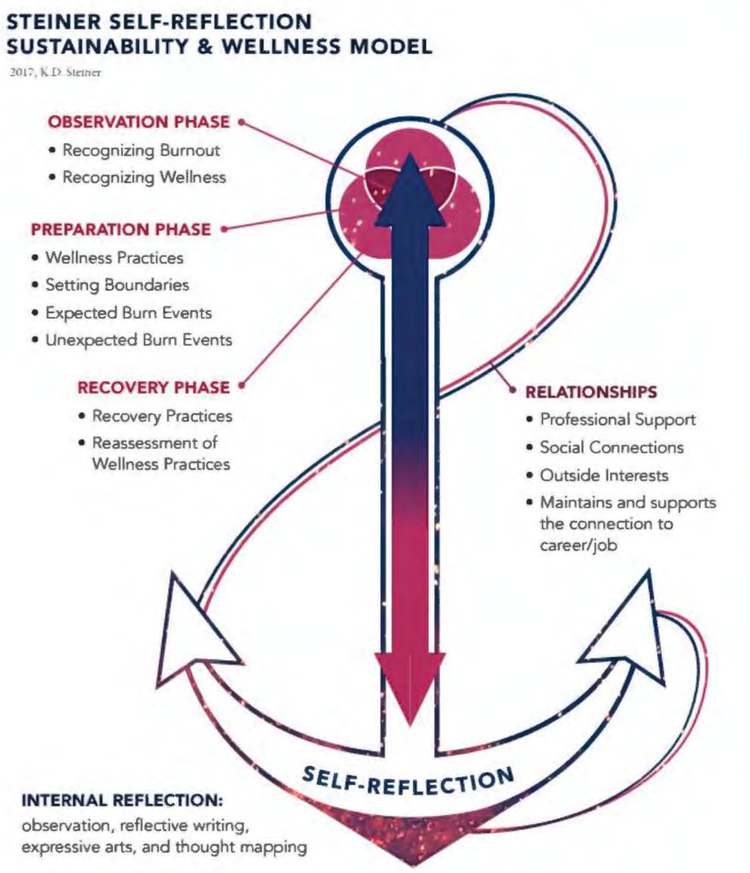
KATE STEINER, PH.D.

If you are a fan of the movie "Christmas Vacation," you may recall the scene during their Christmas dinner when Clark prepares to slice what appears to be a perfectly cooked turkey. When the knife pierces the skin, it explodes with steam. It turns out the seemingly perfect turkey was left in the oven a bit too long and is completely dry inside.

Working in a profession such as fraternity and sorority advising, professionals and volunteers may have experienced a time when they were the crispy turkey. When one reaches the crispy turkey stage they experience burnout. A person may be able to maintain a certain appearance on the outside, but they have nothing left to give on the inside. The Steiner Self Reflection Sustainability Wellness (SSRSW) model was recently introduced in the winter 2019 edition of Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors. This model was developed through a grounded theory method based on the experiences of long-term fraternity and sorority advisors (FSAs). Through an anchor of self-reflection, this model serves to help professionals address burn events before they lead to crispy turkey burnout.

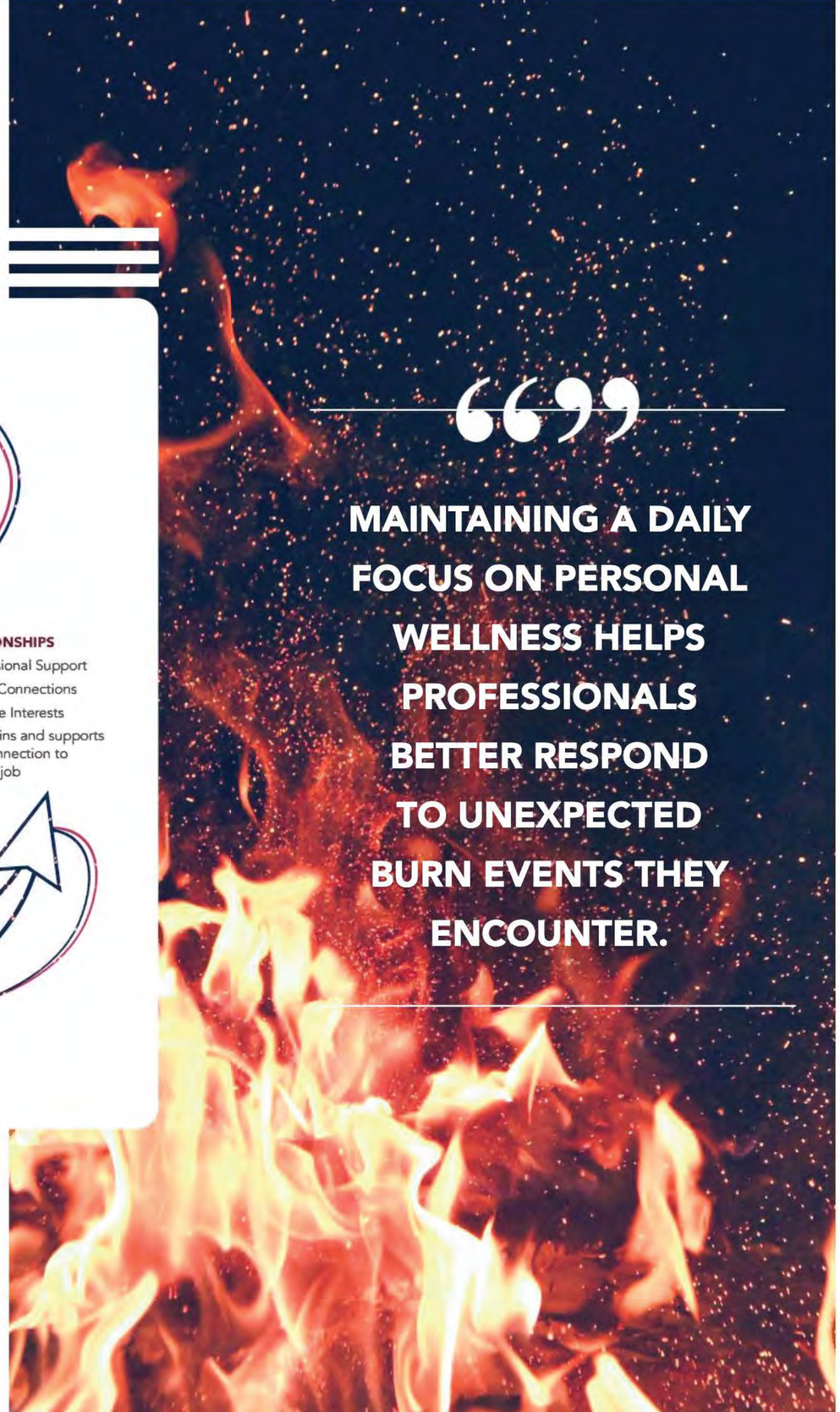
BURN EVENTS

Burn events are short periods of time where career or personal experiences lead a professional to feel worn down, apathetic to their role, or a desire to create distance from that role. There are two types of burn events — expected and unexpected. Professionals can plan for expected burn events, as they are known prior to occurring. These are events you know will take a toll on energy levels during and after an event. Examples include overseeing a recruitment process, coordinating convention, attending a conference, awards season, or participating in a large-scale campus or organization event. Unexpected burn events occur without warning. They often require shifting one's daily responsibilities to respond. Examples include hazing investigations, student death, personal crisis, or forced job transition. Unmanaged or unaddressed burn events can compound and lead to burnout. Using the SSRSW model to address individual burnout is one way for professionals to help sustain their wellness and career.



SSRSW MODEL

The SSRSW Model includes three phases: Observation, Preparation, and Recovery. Each phase is connected and rather than moving in a linear process, professionals move through the phases in a fluid motion, by practicing self-reflection. Self-reflection occurs in both internal and external realms. Internal practices include body scans, journaling, self-observation, expressive arts, and thought mapping. External practices consist of seeking feedback, counseling, and process discussion. Relationships are the anchor and connect self-reflection to one's professional life and career. Rather than focusing on finding balance between personal and professional life, this model encourages the incorporation of both and considers how each impacts the other. Self-reflection is constant throughout the model as professionals learn more with burn events as catalysts.


MAINTAINING A DAILY FOCUS ON PERSONAL WELLNESS HELPS PROFESSIONALS BETTER RESPOND TO UNEXPECTED BURN EVENTS THEY ENCOUNTER.

• OBSERVATION PHASE

During this phase, professionals note what burn experiences look like for them. Tracking burn events and creating a calendar of events that occur each year, in addition to reflecting upon how each burn event is experienced, is an important part of Observation. Using wellness assessments to discover areas that need more focus or tracking what wellness practices drop first during stressful times are also important reflection practices for this phase. Identifying what activities helped most during past burn events and then creating a list of those effective methods is another way professionals can practice Observation. The Observation phase always follows Recovery as one constantly considers what adjustments must be made to one's wellness practices.

• PREPARATION PHASE

The Preparation phase includes reflecting upon and implementing a plan to address burn events as they occur. For expected burn events, professionals should proactively consider what they need to perform at their best during the event time frame. This may include a daily ritual to unwind from the busyness, setting a specific sleep schedule, using boundaries to ensure exercise still occurs, or packing food to ensure healthy eating. Professionals should also prepare for the Recovery phase during this time by scheduling recovery activities to follow the expected burn event, such as proactively taking time off following the event.

The Preparation phase also includes daily wellness practices. Individuals should spend time reflecting on how different aspects of wellness, such as physical, emotional/mental, social, and spiritual, play a role in their life. Identifying when one feels their best during the Observation phase will lend insights to areas for daily focus during the Preparation phase. Maintaining a daily focus on personal wellness helps professionals better respond to unexpected burn events they encounter.

• RECOVERY PHASE

Recovery occurs after any burn event. This time of reflection often smoothly shifts back into the Observation phase. Recovery is based on the person, event, and individual needs to feel well again. Time frames and activities vary and can span from small actions throughout the day to needing to take time away from one's career space, entirely. Regardless of the activity, a key to the Recovery phase is spending time away from work. This can include vacation, using sick time, going to lunch or working out away from the workspace, talking to a friend about non-work subjects, and reading a non-work-related book or article. To fully recover, professionals must have at least some time to fully disengage from their professional role. Professionals should keep a list of strategies that help them recover and add to the list each time a new strategy or resource is discovered.

A NOTE ABOUT PLAY

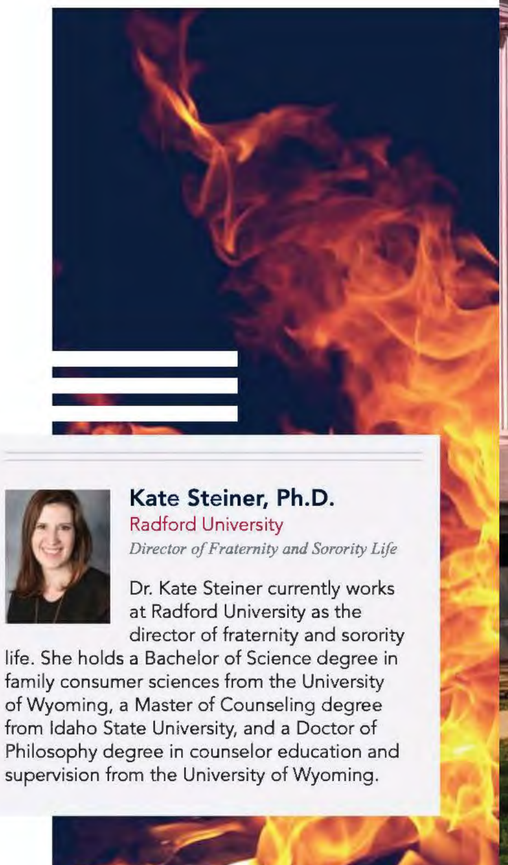
Play can often be dismissed, perceived as unproductive or a distraction, or seen as a guilty pleasure that should be kept in the darkness. Play is just as important for adults as it is for children when it comes to development and happiness. Play encourages critical thinking, personality development, creativity, brain functionality, and stress relief. Some examples of play include taking a workout class, having a spontaneous dance party in the grocery store, and even "what-if" tangent discussions over beverages with a friend.

Play should include the following things:

1. It is self-chosen and self-directed. It is always voluntary and often spontaneous. It is not time bound and continues until the individual decides to end it. For example, the grocery store dance may only last until you get to the end of the aisle or the song ends.
2. The means are more valued than the end result. There is no goal to play other than to play.
3. Play is guided by mental rules. While play is freely chosen, it is not an activity without structure. Rules that players either invent or accept are in place.
4. It is differentiated from reality in some way. Play is meant to be an escape from the everyday world and responsibilities.
5. Play involves an active and alert, but non-stressed frame of mind. Play takes on a flow where the mind is occupied by the ideas, rules, and actions of the game.

Allowing play to be part of one's daily actions is an important component of wellness. It can involve several wellness aspects from physical activity to social engagement to emotional release. For those wondering how to incorporate more play into life, consider trying a new group fitness or dance class, sing along to the car radio, listen to an audiobook while commuting, or incorporate a "Yes! And…" improvisation into the brainstorming session at a future staff meeting. When in doubt, dance down the grocery store aisles — worry most about having fun and not about what people might think.

Professionals can create a more sustainable career path in the field of fraternity and sorority advising, and adopting a practice of self-reflection for Observation, Preparation, and Recovery is an important step. This is akin to a "caution hot" sign or sunscreen. Similarly to how people actively prevent themselves from getting burns, this model can do the same for professionals and help ensure wellness in their careers.



Kate Steiner, Ph.D.
Radford University
Director of Fraternity and Sorority Life

Dr. Kate Steiner currently works at Radford University as the director of fraternity and sorority life. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in family consumer sciences from the University of Wyoming, a Master of Counseling degree from Idaho State University, and a Doctor of Philosophy degree in counselor education and supervision from the University of Wyoming.

CONFLICT
THE CASE FOR FRATERNITY & SORORITY PROFESSIONALS

DEVIN BERGHORST, PH.D.

Conflict is natural and inevitable in fraternities and sororities. The book "The Semisovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy In America" by Eric Schattschneider suggests the outcome of conflict does not depend on the original participants but on its scope and involvement of new participants, including those managing the conflict. In my study "Exploring the Relationship between Fraternal Organizations and the University of Michigan: An Organizational Analysis," I examine implications various eras of conflict in the fraternity and sorority community at U of M had for student affairs professionals over time, and extrapolate three reasons why the process of navigating conflict can help demonstrate the value fraternity and sorority professionals provide to an institution.

SIGNIFICANT TIMES OF CONFLICT

The Fraternity War (1845 - 1851):

The Fraternity War at the University of Michigan was an era of discontent among students who wished to establish fraternities and the faculty who opposed them. After years of conflict involving student expulsion, fraternities moving underground and community members rallying against faculty, the university returned to a state of peace. This was accomplished by removing faculty members who opposed fraternities, changing the institution's governance structure at the direction of the State of Michigan, and establishing new rules and regulations that allowed student organizations — like fraternities — to exist on campus. During this time, the first university president was hired to oversee students and allow faculty to focus on teaching and research.

Ski Trip Incident (2015 - Present):

In January 2015, six fraternal organizations caused significant damage at a ski resort, creating instant conflict over the right of fraternities and sororities to exist and for students to freely associate with them. Unlike the Fraternity War, the ski trip incident involved student affairs professionals who were able to respond to and leverage the conflict by creating new policies, procedures, and structures. The ski trip incident led to the creation of the Greek Life Task Force, which convened university partners and stakeholders to reflect on the state of fraternity and sorority life at the university. From this task force multiple suggestions were made and implemented, including the establishment of a closer relationship between the university and the fraternity and sorority community, new rules regarding the timing of recruitment to better support students, and the creation of new positions in the Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life to better support the community.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FRATERNITY & SORORITY PROFESSIONALS

Conflict is a term that can have negative connotations. This can cause a reticence to accept conflict resolution as a key function of one's role. However, reframing the concept can help illuminate how this can become an important part of a fraternity and sorority professional's work, as well as an important need for the institution. In an American Journal of Sociology article on conflict, Georg Simmel describes conflict as "the resolution of tension between the contraries." To take it a step further, Lewis Coser discusses social conflict and social change in The British Journal of Sociology and states conflict occurs when one group wishes to change the established social structure to gain more power or gratification for themselves. In essence, conflict occurs between groups when their values no longer align, causing relationships to become strained. To reduce tension, each party must agree to terms for peace. If this does not happen, relationships can fail. When peace is achieved, tension likely remains but no longer to the point of conflict. In these periods of reduced conflict, policy making is stable and consistent. However, when conflict is present and relations become strained, policymaking is often abrupt and can create significant change to an organization.

During the Fraternity War, faculty initially allowed fraternities to exist but later tried to prevent them altogether. During this time, fraternities sought to exist without supervision from the university. By the end of the Fraternity War, fraternities were allowed to exist with supervision and approval from the university. Those faculty who opposed the new norm were removed from the institution and fraternities became institutionalized at the University of Michigan. Coser suggests that over time either fraternities or the university would become frustrated with the arrangement and attempt to modify the rules. Here, the values of fraternities and university administrators would come into conflict again, and in a renewed conflict, neither side would prevail. Instead, a new period of conflict would emerge and only end when those opposing the original peace were removed and new or modified rules could be established.

For fraternity and sorority professionals, this is a lesson on conflict between contrary parties with similar levels of power and resolve. When two equal parties meet in conflict, it only ends when those parties agree to norms that create peace or when the relationship dissolves. A conflict that ends in peace creates new rules between the groups that will hold until one group becomes dissatisfied and challenges the established norms, reopening conflict and starting the cycle over. Fraternity and sorority professionals would do well to be aware of their institutional history, and the conflicts that preceded them, to avoid reopening unwinnable conflicts. Conflicts that originally ended in the creation of rules and regulations are unlikely to be resolved in any other way. When conflict does arise, a change in established rules may be avoided if fraternity and sorority professionals can effectively manage the conflict. Fraternity and sorority professionals are conflict managers, regardless of role. Therefore, it is vital staff at all levels are equipped to provide appropriate conflict management services. Their function is to assist students in navigating tension and provide reassurance to community stakeholders to help minimize and control conflict.

Fraternity and sorority professionals would do well to be aware of their institutional history, and the conflicts that preceded them, to avoid reopening unwinnable conflicts.

In the book "Organizations In Action: Social Science Bases of Administrative Theory," author James Thompson details a model of organizational theory that would suggest fraternity and sorority professionals exist to mediate between the main functions of the university — teaching, learning and service — and those who use it by creating policies and procedures. Student affairs developed as a result of colleges and universities creating specific roles to manage student conflict so faculty could focus on teaching and research.

The Fraternity War illuminates the need for student affairs professionals. In 1845, University of Michigan faculty were responsible for teaching and research as well as managing the student body. As fraternities challenged faculty governance over students, it became apparent faculty alone could not manage the student body. Thus, at the end of the Fraternity War, the first university president was hired to manage the student body, allowing faculty to focus on research and teaching. Over time, specialized positions were created to manage specialized conflicts. In 1921, the first dean of students was appointed. In 1933, as fraternities grew in both size and influence, the first fraternity professional was hired. Role specialization proliferated in student affairs as additional roles were created in similar ways.

The primary purpose of colleges and universities is teaching, research, and service. Students come to the university to learn. Everything that happens to them while at the university can stand contrary to that learning, unless appropriately managed. As student affairs roles developed to manage specific aspects of the student experience, student affairs professionals assigned their own purpose to those roles. Some student affairs professionals may argue their role is to develop leaders, promote student health, provide educational housing experiences, etc. These are important aspects of each individual student affairs role; however, if one accepts that conflict is the result of divergent interests or "tension between contraries," then it is possible to make the case that all student affairs professionals — including fraternity and sorority professionals — are also conflict managers.

With that in mind, how do fraternity and sorority professionals create change to existing norms and systems without reopening old conflict? Coser suggests flexibility in the organization. If the organization is flexible, it can adapt to support dissatisfied groups without falling into full conflict. Adaptation suggests creating partnerships and bottom-up solutions to problems rather than systemic changes made from the top-down.

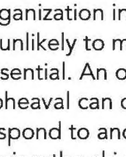
If change is necessary, fraternity and sorority professionals may consider managing conflict by bringing contrary parties together to seek solutions to presenting issues. As an organization, structures must exist to make managing conflict an effective solution. During the Fraternity War, the University of Michigan was inflexible because the faculty sought to maintain control over every aspect of the university and were unwilling to relinquish control or compromise. Conversely, in response to the ski trip incident, the university had students affairs staff to manage the conflict in a more nimble and responsive way.

To successfully manage conflict, fraternity and sorority professionals must be organized and resourced in a way to promote success. Senior leaders may consider establishing structures so fraternity and sorority professionals have the ability to prevent or successfully manage conflict, including hiring additional staff to assist with existing work, creating new positions to

address issues, or reorganizing existing staff to better fit presenting needs. Restructuring can better position staff to manage and respond to conflict when it occurs. Professionals may also seek to establish partnerships within and outside the organization prior to conflicts that will inevitably occur.

Resources, however, for increased staff and structures in fraternity and sorority life are frequently not available. While this may generally hold true, creating change is possible if one is ready to take advantage of periods of conflict. An organization in a state of peace changes slowly and is unlikely to make major changes if they are not essential. An organization experiencing conflict or upheaval can change rapidly in an effort to manage, respond to and mitigate such circumstances. As during the ski trip incident, the case can be made for increased resources, structural change, and professional development for fraternity and sorority professionals to better manage conflict and achieve positive outcomes.

The opportunity to take advantage of conflict is extremely important for fraternity and sorority professionals. Understanding both the historical context and nature of conflict is essential, but fraternity and sorority professionals must also accept their role in managing conflict. Conflict is inevitable and natural. Conflict also requires and demands participants. Only when faced with conflict can fraternity and sorority professionals make a case for additional resources to expand units and increase support for their communities. In a time when national headlines are filled with incidents related to fraternities and sororities, it is important for fraternity and sorority professionals to make the case for why their roles are important and why they need additional resources. Why not use conflict to make that case?



Devin Berghorst, Ph.D.
University of Michigan
Senior Case Manager, Student Support Services

Devin graduated from Hope College with a degree in psychology and in secondary education with a social studies composite focus. After Hope, he earned a master's in higher education from the University of Michigan while working as a graduate assistant in the Office of Greek Life. In the spring of 2019, Devin completed his PhD in educational leadership at Eastern Michigan University.

Adaptation suggests creating partnerships and bottom-up solutions to problems rather than systemic changes made from the top-down.

THERE IS LIFE OUTSIDE OF YOUR WORKPLACE

BRITTANY BARNES DEEG

Look at your phone and identify the last ten people you called and texted. Cross out those related to employment or volunteer work. If the number of people left makes you think "huh," you are likely not alone. Many fraternity and sorority professionals can feel socially isolated when divorced from their workplaces, colleagues, and students. Nothing demonstrates this stark reality more acutely than the recent shift to remote work many experienced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Even in simpler times, loneliness is a companion for many professionals on the road and in physically distant locations such as college towns. This reality illuminates the questions: Why does community beyond colleagues matter and how can it be successfully cultivated?

Forming community based on similar life experiences and building meaningful relationships within the workplace can create support networks where people feel seen, heard, and valued. Fraternity and sorority professionals feel great affinity for this field and the subsequent community it often creates. This is a good thing given the helping nature of the work. That affinity, however, can also lead to an inability to disengage from work. For individuals working in isolated college towns or those who spend the majority of working time on the road, this presents the unique challenge of identifying how to best engage with colleagues without making them the sole focus of one's community. This is especially challenging when colleagues are readily available to grab a meal or chat in spaces where external relationships appear to be few or hard to come by.

While such a community creates many benefits, it may also present additional challenges in navigating the multiple social identities that exist in personal and professional roles. Research on supervision suggests no matter how close a person may be to those they supervise, it is nearly impossible to neutralize power differentials in the relationship. The act of continually monitoring how one "shows up" to colleagues outside of the workplace leads to barriers for being fully known and at ease in social situations. Conversations likely revolve around what happened last week, planning for the next event, and anecdotes about the office. These topics perpetuate the narrative that work is the most valuable use of time and primary means for connecting with others.

The previous example contributes to an inability to recover from work. With a lack of non-work related social outlets and an increased amount of self-worth tied to the productivity, efficiency and competence of work, one's identity becomes inextricably tied to performance. Add to that an underlying sense of competitiveness that pervades a variety of industries (including fraternity/sorority advising), and the result is individuals tied to their email and phones at all hours, referencing work on the weekends, and feeling guilty for pursuing interests beyond the office. Continuing to perform — even while away from the physical space — can lead to fatigue at best and exhaustion at worst due to lack of recovery time.

So how did the fraternity and sorority profession — built upon a foundation of proposed social excellence — get here? It's a complicated question with a complex answer. There is no perfect mixture of factors that creates this phenomenon, but the answer likely involves individualization and loneliness.

Robert Putnam published the book "Bowling Alone" chronicling how the average American's social engagement has drastically changed over the last century. The research suggests we socialize with families and friends less frequently, belong to fewer organizations, and know fewer of our neighbors and generally trust them less than we did in the 20th century. Changes in industry and the United States' social fabric contributed to this distancing and the evolution of a nation built on individualized rather than shared experiences.

Overlay that with "parasocial relationships" people build with influencers and celebrities via social media and there is a shift from valuing an "intimate support group (~5 people)" to a "less intimate sympathy group (~15)," as described in a 2018 Computers in Human Behavior article about social media activity and its impact on intimacy in social relationships. Additional research suggests individuals who are unpartnered and/or living alone engage support networks more often than others, but they feel the most lonely and "bored" of all groups studied. Many

"WITH A LACK OF NON-WORK RELATED SOCIAL OUTLETS AND AN INCREASED AMOUNT OF SELF-WORTH TIED TO THE PRODUCTIVITY, EFFICIENCY AND COMPETENCE OF WORK, ONE'S IDENTITY BECOMES INEXTRICABLY TIED TO PERFORMANCE."

professionals identify as people in their 20s and 30s, living without roommates, and navigating the physical world based on idealized social media posts. They are connected to many but find themselves in a community of few trusted friends within a walkable or driveable distance.

The New Yorker published "The History of Loneliness" in April, tracing the study of negative impacts associated with loneliness and isolation since the time of Charles Darwin. The author cites a Loneliness Scale developed by doctors at UCLA, that asks respondents if they often, sometimes, rarely, or never feel the following:

- I am unhappy doing so many things alone.
- I have nobody to talk to.
- I cannot tolerate being so alone.
- I feel as if nobody really understands me.
- I am no longer close to anyone.
- There is no one I can turn to.
- I feel isolated from others.

The article also outlines physiological responses to loneliness and details how the body equates being alone with an emergency, throwing people into a constant state of fight or flight. No wonder professionals may experience feelings of anxiety, stress, and tiredness when confronted with the choice to form community in unfamiliar ways. The question becomes: "Do I risk constant stress-induced loneliness or continue to navigate work-fatigue in the company of co-workers?" It appears to be a lose-lose situation, but one that many opt for the latter choice.

Luckily, there are a myriad of benefits to breaking the cycle and beginning the process of developing community outside the workplace. Dr. Vivek Murthy, former Surgeon General of the United States, outlines in his book "Together: The Healing Power of Human Connection in a Sometimes Lonely World," that we are wired to desire connection. He shares narratives of how to foster meaningful relationships in the face of surface exchanges such as spending time with loved ones, focusing on one another with undivided attention, making time to connect with ourselves, and balancing the amount you give to others with the amount you receive.

These themes hold true in research on Blue Zones — places where people live longer than the average world's population. A main cultural tenet in these places is the establishment of a few long standing friendships that persist through times of individual stress; a community that gathers at least four times a month; and intergenerational relationships with the elderly and other family members. A second tenet of Blue Zone success is "downshifting" to disengage from work and pause with a nap, exercise, mindfulness, or happy hour with friends. These two factors indicate having multiple circles of connection, as well as multiple modes of connecting are beneficial for longevity and personal well-being. It is worth noting longevity is not the goal in these societies, but it becomes the outcrop of a life lived well.

So how is it done? Where to begin? Building a social network beyond one's workplace — while worthwhile — can present challenges. It involves entering a third space — a physical or virtual place that isn't work or home. This requires energy and also requires cultivating relationships that are not pre-packaged. Individuals have to discover commonalities over time rather than being thrust into environments that create a fail-safe common denominator. This can be especially difficult in a field that exists to construct spaces and structures for relationships to emerge.

It's worth noting the terms "cultivate" and "develop" have been chosen for a reason — it takes work to connect with people and sustain meaningful relationships. So while the following recommendations offer a place to begin, there is something to be said for the upkeep of community engagement beyond the initial greeting.

- **Try a new activity.** Many towns, cities, and neighborhoods offer craft meet-ups, community theatre organizations, gaming groups, hiking outings, and gardening clubs, to name a few. Events can be found using the city feature on social media and at local libraries — check their bulletin boards for information on events and ask librarians for additional resources on the topics. Websites like SkillShare and Youtube also offer a multitude of tutorials and courses to facilitate learning and bring together folks of similar skill and interest levels.

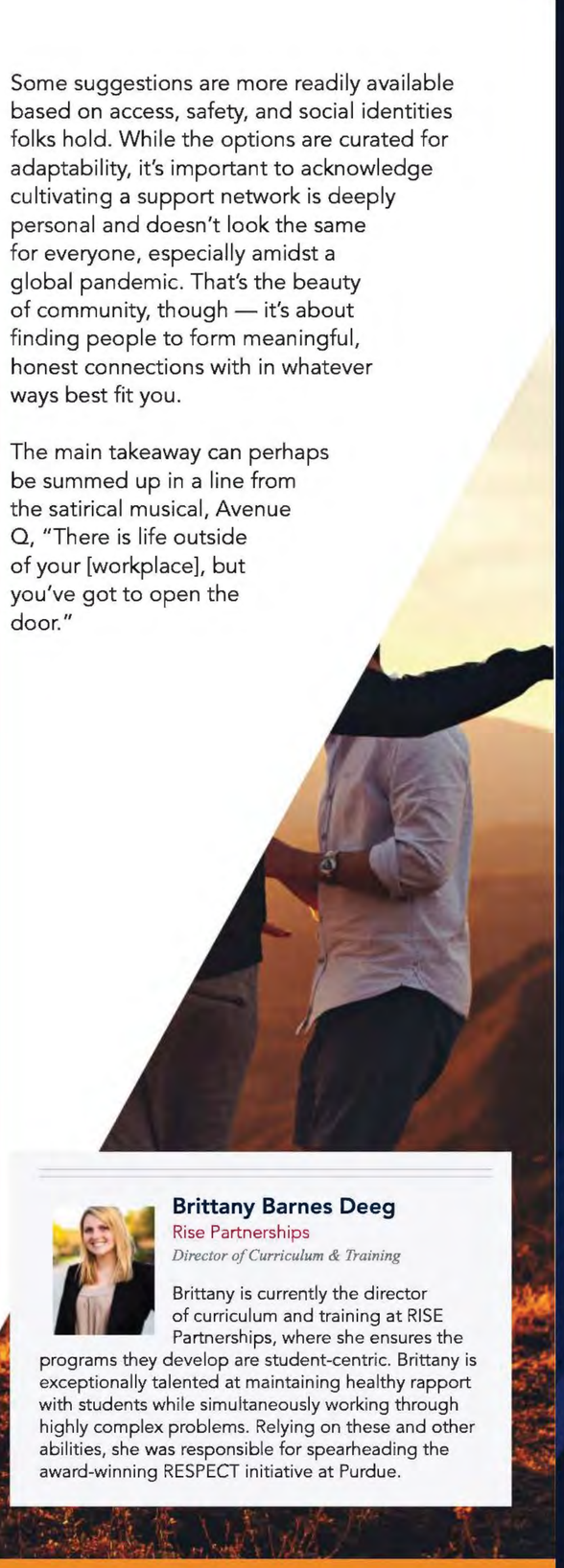
- **Take an academic class together.** For scholarly-minded folks, taking group lessons can be the beginning of finding friendship. Think outside the box. Improv comedy, gourmet cooking, daring parkour, gentle meditation, and outdoor geocaching are some class options that may be available. Free online classes hosted by Coursera, KahnAcademy, and edX all offer virtual opportunities to learn alongside others. Virtual book clubs are another opportunity to build knowledge and discuss literature in a more casual setting.

- **Seek community based on similar values and beliefs.** This example may feel familiar to fraternity and sorority professionals as it is a practice we encourage undergraduate students to heed as they consider membership. Turning inward and exploring the question "what do I care about?" can provide direction and lead to searching Google, social networks, and even local newspapers for meetings of ideologically aligned people. For some this may take the form of a faith-based community, political affiliation group, or socially active organization.

- **Engage across distance using virtual spaces.** This method has surged in recent months, but bears repeating. Virtual happy hours and Google hangouts offer a unique way to build community with those outside your immediate physical sphere. Also consider the unique features on BumbleBFF and MeetUps centered on connecting people across distance in platonic ways.

Some suggestions are more readily available based on access, safety, and social identities folks hold. While the options are curated for adaptability, it's important to acknowledge cultivating a support network is deeply personal and doesn't look the same for everyone, especially amidst a global pandemic. That's the beauty of community, though — it's about finding people to form meaningful, honest connections with in whatever ways best fit you.

The main takeaway can perhaps be summed up in a line from the satirical musical, Avenue Q, "There is life outside of your [workplace], but you've got to open the door."



Brittany Barnes Deeg
Rise Partnerships
Director of Curriculum & Training

Brittany is currently the director of curriculum and training at RISE Partnerships, where she ensures the programs they develop are student-centric. Brittany is exceptionally talented at maintaining healthy rapport with students while simultaneously working through highly complex problems. Relying on these and other abilities, she was responsible for spearheading the award-winning RESPECT initiative at Purdue.

from Perspectives to practice

On average, American adults process 34 gigabytes (more than 100,000 words) of information daily. Our lives are flooded with Google searches, YouTube videos, Facebook and Twitter posts, and a never-ending feed of suggested reading, watching, and listening. Media consumption is a constant task — conscious and subconscious — to separate the trivial from the significant, fact from opinion, process new information, and discern meaning.

Perspectives provides a forum for ideas, opinions, and experiences that is thought-provoking and innovative; shares new information; highlights best practices; and challenges thought. As a quarterly publication, we recognize Perspectives is a microscopic part of your general — and professional — information consumption reality. We want to ensure the content published in Perspectives is communicated, positioned, and promoted in a way to maximize impact by encouraging continued discussion and informing practical application.

"From Perspectives to Practice" aims to provide a guide for learning through a focus on continued discussion, engagement, and action. You'll find this section at the end of each issue. We hope it helps you critically examine the viewpoints offered, make meaning of the content, and identify ways for further engagement through applying the ideas in these pages to your everyday practice.

MAKING THE MOST OF THIS PUBLICATION

1. Engage with the content : Read the article more than once, and as you are reading, do the following:

- Identify one important concept, research finding, theory, or idea you learned.
- Determine why you identified that piece of information as important.
- Apply what you learned from the article to some aspect of your work.
- Take it a step further: What question(s) does the article raise for you? What are you still wondering about? What do you agree or disagree with?

2. Reflect : What stood out to you in each article? What new information was presented? Did you experience any "aha" moments?

3. Share & Discuss : Take those highlights and insights and discuss them with friends. Share them with stakeholders. Create an idea pipeline and see how the concept(s) evolve.

4. Write About It : Did something resonate with you? Frustrate you? Did reflection lead to brilliance? Put those thoughts into words and add your own viewpoints to the discussion.

5. Put it into practice : What is a key takeaway that can inform your work? How can you take that information and apply it? What is realistic? What is a longer term goal?

**Adapted from the 2017 Unmistakable Creative post, "A Quick and Effective Guide to Remember and Apply What You Read."*

Continued Discussion:

Show Me Your Policies and I'll Verify Your Statement

Discussion Question: Reflect upon a time your employer or membership organization issued a statement on current or ongoing injustice. How was that statement constructed? What action coincided with or followed the statement? Was it sustained? Did it move beyond the surface? If not, what opportunities exist to bring light to that gap now and in the future?

Discussion Question: The author directly addresses three components of a standard public statement about injustice — the message, the culture, and the money. Reflect upon these components as they exist within your place of employment and/or membership organization. What is the message? What is the culture? Where is the money? What do the answers to those questions illuminate?

Mental Health, COVID-19, and Advising Strategies: Using Member Perceptions From the Fraternity and Sorority Experience Survey (FSES) To Inform Practice

Discussion Question: Consider the communities you work or volunteer for. Does the data showcased in this article reflect or relate to what you observe in those communities? Why or why not?

Discussion Question: One contributor to this article states, "It is time to move past doing mental health awareness in organizations and start using programs that teach members and leaders skills to address mental health challenges." Consider the programming your office, institution, and/or organization offers or connects students to regarding mental health. Is it awareness-based or skill-based? How can you encourage a shift to more skill and strategy-based approaches to mental health education?

Vice President of Student Affairs Round Table: A Discussion About Making Certain Decisions Amidst Uncertainty

Discussion Question: This article illustrates the varying degrees of understanding, knowledge, and involvement of stakeholders in crisis. If you are a senior leader, consider the perspectives of new and mid-level professionals amidst crisis. How can that shift in perspective help inform your thoughts and decision-making? If you are a new or mid-level professional, consider the perspectives of senior level professionals amidst crisis. How can that rotation of perspective help inform your thoughts and decision-making?

Discussion Question: Leadership and decision-making in times of crisis is complex and multi-faceted. In this article, contributors speak to how they work to instill confidence in their teams while making decisions. Consider this question within your own sphere of influence: how do you gain buy-in and instill confidence in your stakeholders during times of heightened emotion and complexity?

Inclusion With A Caveat: Sexuality, Gender Identity & Expression Within Fraternity and Sorority Life

Discussion Question: The author questions if fraternity and sorority organizations that espouse diversity, equity, and inclusion policies are simply engaging in performative acts. When it comes to inclusion tied to sexuality and gender identity, how is your office, institution, and/or organization engaging in this topic? Is it performative? Is there engagement? Whatever the answer, what drives that action (or lack of action)?

Discussion Question: The author shares a testimonial of how he found belonging within an organization that traditionally is not expected to provide such an experience for someone that identifies outside of its prescribed norms. Consider other types of lived experiences that may or may not be shared in the context of these organizations. As professionals and volunteers, how can these stories be amplified to help individuals across identity spectrums see the fraternity and sorority experience as a space for them?

Excerpt: Embrace and Reform

Discussion Question: The author suggests we are currently in hazing's prohibition era and states, "Just like America's historical prohibition of alcohol, we have not stopped the production of hazing. Instead, we have ensured it can be produced in a way that is wholly unregulated and reckless." Do you agree or disagree? Why?

Discussion Question: This article proposes a shift from a "moralize and suppress" paradigm within anti-hazing advocacy to one focused on reforming hazing practices and ensuring informed consent. Consider both frameworks. What potential benefits and concerns exist within the "moralize and suppress" paradigm the author describes? What potential benefits and concerns exist within the "embrace and reform" framework outlined in this article?

Examining the Disconnect: If Students Doubt the Benefits of Hazing, Why Do They Stay?

Discussion Question: Research shows students' rationalization of hazing experiences exists parallel to skepticism about the impact of hazing. Consider this in the context of the communities you work or volunteer with. Do you see this potential disconnect within those communities? What are examples?

Discussion Question: The author outlines several common rationalizations students make to justify remaining in an organization that hazes. Have you encountered these mindsets in your work or volunteering? What steps did you take to help students question and deconstruct them?

You Are Flammable: Creating a Burn Resistant Career

Discussion Question: The author refers to "burn events" as "short periods of time where career or personal experiences lead a professional to feel worn down, apathetic to their role, or a desire to create distance from that role." Reflect upon your career. Can you identify specific "burn events" as described? What response did you have to those burn events?

Discussion Question: The author presents a model to help individuals address burn events before they lead to burnout. Think about a past or current burn event you experienced (or are experiencing). Apply the model — Observation, Preparation, and Recovery — to the event. Did reflecting upon and applying this model help develop a strategy for overcoming the burn event?

Conflict: The Case for Fraternity & Sorority Professionals

Discussion Question: The author reflects upon significant times of conflict that contributed to the evolution of the University of Michigan - Ann Arbor fraternity/sorority community. Consider the communities you work or volunteer with. What significant times of conflict have shaped the current makeup and culture of those communities?

Discussion Question: Consider how you manage conflict and apply the components outlined in this article. Does your current method for addressing and working through conflict align? If not, what adjustments can you make or help others make the next time conflict rolls around?

There is Life Outside of Your Workplace

Discussion Question: The author highlights how strong affinity within the fraternity and sorority industry can lead to an inability to disengage from work. Consider this in your own life or in the context of those you work with. What do you notice? How might this play out and what is its potential impact on personal and professional well being?

Discussion Question: The article highlights how the average American's social engagement has drastically changed over the last century. What does this shift in social engagement — to more individualized experiences and parasocial relationships — mean for a field built on community and shared social experiences? What does this mean for individual relationship building and establishing true belonging within an increasingly connected, yet disconnected, world?

Continued Engagement:

Read the following Essentials and Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors articles that relate to topics discussed in this issue:

- April 2020 Essentials: "COVID-19 & Cultural Biases: A Cultural Competency Quick Guide" by Phillips Thomas Hornbuckle, J.D.
- February 2020 Essentials: "Dismantling Systemic Organizational Oppression: Making Institutional Commitment to Culturally Based Fraternities & Sororities at Predominantly White Institutions" by Travis L. Martin, Ph.D., & Keith Garcia
- October 2019 Essentials: "Beyond the Numbers: Navigating the Enrollment Decline" by Corry Smith
- November 2019 Essentials: "Daily Oopsies & the Cycle of Failure" by Dr. Kate Steiner & Dan Faill
- Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors, Volume 14, Issue 2, Winter 2019: "Joining In, Blowing the Whistle, or Intervening: Examining the Effects of Severity and Organizational Identification on Fraternity/Sorority Members' Responses to Hazing"
- Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors, Volume 13, Issue 2, Fall 2018: "Tweeting in Greek: How National Fraternities & Sororities Use Twitter"

Check out the following books, articles, podcasts, or videos/shows that can enhance discussion of topics in this issue:

- Explore this compilation of resources provided by Racial Equity Tools on how to create sustainable systemic change
- Check out the TIME Magazine article "Several Antiracist Books Are Selling Out. Here's What Else Black Booksellers and Publishers Say You Should Read" by Suyin Haynes
- Browse this list of books about lived experiences within the LGBTQIA+ community
- Review the McKinsey & Company "Plan-Ahead Team" approach to navigating the COVID-19 pandemic and consider how this model can be introduced within your office, division, organization, or company

Ongoing personal and professional development opportunities tied to this issue theme:

- Revisit your "AFA Core Competencies Self Assessment" results and reflect upon how they intersect with this issue's regular short feature on applying the Core Competencies in daily work
- Check out resources provided by the National Museum of African American History & Culture on talking about race
- Share your office, organization, or company's plan for navigating COVID-19 during the 2020-2021 academic year and beyond, and view responses from other AFA members in the weekly Professional Development newsletter.

Continued Action:

Read or consider contributing to upcoming editions of Essentials and Oracle.

Select an article to discuss at an upcoming staff or division meeting, council meeting, with students, etc. — use it as a discussion topic to kick off the meeting and then share the conversation's outcome with the hashtag #AFAPerspectives.

Review the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors Core Competencies and identify ways the content relates or doesn't relate — how can you use the information gained to continue to build your professional competence?

Circulate an article that resonates with stakeholders based on your campus, organization, vendor, or company's circumstances.

Look outside of the industry — what concepts relate, challenge, or inform our thinking and practice? Who else can we learn from?

Reflect and write for a future issue: Email borton@deltau.org or brookegoodman01@gmail.com with questions, article ideas and submissions.

Stay curious: Ask questions, challenge ideas, and see how this content can spark ongoing thought and practice.

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After the coronavirus upended American life, millions of students ... the turnaround from sitting in campus lecture halls to live-streaming seminars at their kitchen tables. Do students think their pricey degrees are worth the cost when delivered remotely?

The Wall Street Journal asked that question in April, and one student respon...

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